

CLAUDIA RODEN:
Time to put French food back on the table
COMMENT, PAGE 19

EVEREST DIARY
In the dentist's chair at 16,000 feet
NEWS, PAGE 7

ADDICTS AT THE CROSSROADS
Clapton opens Antiguan rehab centre
NEWS, PAGE 3

LUDLOW UNDER SIEGE
Market town fights off new invaders
FEATURES, PAGE 15

THE INDEPENDENT

Saturday 18 April 1998 70p (IR70p) No 3,588

Crisis day for Trimble as Unionists vote

By David McGittrick and Anthony Bevis

DAVID TRIMBLE today goes before a deeply divided Ulster Unionist Party in a quest for a vital endorsement of last week's potentially historic new British-Irish agreement.

Sources in both the Trimble camp and within the anti-agreement faction were last night forecasting that he would win the vote at this morning's meeting of the 800-strong Ulster Unionist Council, his party's governing body.

But most observers are also expecting a substantial vote against the agreement, following rejections of the accord by a number of influential elements within Unionism and Orangism.

The Council is the body which in 1995 elected Mr Trimble as leader of the Unionist party following his headline performance at the first controversial Drumcree Orange march in Co Armagh two months earlier. He goes into today's meeting with both the Order's Grand Lodge and specifically its Co Armagh Lodge opposed to the new deal.

Although the UUP executive endorsed the agreement last Saturday, the days since then have seen growing opposition to

the accord, with few influential voices in the party raised in its defence. Mr Trimble will hope that today's meeting will reveal a hitherto silent majority which is prepared to support it.

John Hunter, a leading barrister in the party, yesterday gave a flavour of the activity within its ranks, describing it as on the verge of ripping itself apart. He said: "You've had members of parliament slamming down phones on constituency chairmen and vice versa. Families are split, lifelong friends are split, council colleagues are split. My great fear is that Unionism has the potential at this time to literally pull itself apart."

Tony Blair yesterday offered Mr Trimble maximum support in the hope of helping him through today's meeting. In interviews clearly designed to reassure waverers, the Prime Minister said there was no prospect of people wedded to the gun and the bomb being released from prison or serving in the proposed Belfast assembly.

He said: "The assembly won't work if you have a situation where you have got people sitting round a table trying to govern, making decisions, some of whom are still wedded to violence."

He added: "If the IRA car-

ry on being committed to violence or, simply, it is a series of tactical gestures, but there is not a genuine break with violence, then there is the provision there for people to be excluded or removed from office."

On the question of prisoners, Mr Blair went on: "It is important that people realise what is being proposed here. There is no question of any remission or early release unless the organisation and the individuals themselves have given up violence and are safe to be let out into the community."

The decision of the Orange Order in Armagh, which covers Mr Trimble's constituency, was particularly unwelcome to his camp. His close identification with the Order has previously been seen as one of his power bases. Armagh Orangemen urged him to reconsider his position on the agreement, adding: "It is with regret that we are unable to recommend its acceptance to the brethren of Co Armagh."

Rival Unionists clashed at the Northern Ireland Forum in Belfast, where Paisleyites kept up a barrage of heckling as Mr Trimble defended the accord. There were cries of "What about the guns?" and "Sell-out".

Hardliners, page 2

Blair wants to bring peace to Middle East

By Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

TONY Blair is pushing for a greater European role in the Middle East peace process, in the hope that it can help to break the current stalemate between Israel and the Palestinians.

On the first leg of his four-day trip to the Middle East, en route to Cairo, the Prime Minister said that it was possible to make progress - "but only if there is a determined sense of will on both sides to do so".

Fresh from his own success in Northern Ireland, Mr Blair said: "It is extremely important to make progress. If we don't, the show slips backwards, there is a bit of a stand-off and a bit of frustration and that poses problems for the whole region."

Indicating the potential for European investment to oil the wheels of diplomacy, Mr Blair - who currently holds the pres-

idency of the European Union - said that he hoped the EU "in tandem and in concert with the Americans can try and move the process forward".

Last night, in Cairo, Mr Blair held talks with President Hosni Mubarak, in which he said that Britain stood "shoulder to shoulder to fight terrorism from wherever it comes" - a direct response to Egyptian claims that Britain is being used as a safe haven foothold for terrorist activity.

Today in Cairo, Mr Blair will launch a new Egyptian-British business council to stimulate investment, now totalling £1bn. One of the executives of the new council will be Sir Peter de la Billière, who commanded British forces in the Gulf war.

Tomorrow, the Blair caravan will move on to Saudi Arabia, where he plans to raise the question of an early release for the two British nurses - Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan.

They were jailed for the murder of Yvonne Guilford, a fellow nurse at a Dohran hospital in 1996 and there is a hope that their early release can be negotiated.

The Prime Minister's spokesman said yesterday: "If we lower expectations, everything else is a bonus." The clear hope in the Blair party is that progress can be made in moving forward the peace process, and in getting the two nurses out and back to Britain.

The emphasis on British and European investment in the Middle East, and the hope that it can be used as a lever for progress, was underlined by a welter of statistics about investment. In anticipation of the visit to Israel, beginning tomorrow, British sources said that the UK did £2bn-worth of business with Israel each year. It was also said that there were 30,000 British defence jobs dependent on Saudi defence contracts.

Today Antarctica, tomorrow the Thames?



The ice age cometh: A huge ice shelf on the north of the Antarctic has fallen into the sea, new satellite photographs show. Is it global warming? And could it, perversely, turn off the Gulf Stream which warms Britain - and so plunge us into subzero temperatures much of the year? Story, page 2

Children are not fashion accessories, say teachers

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

TEACHERS lambasted parents yesterday for treating their offspring as fashion accessories and allowing a generation of spoilt children to run wild.

Members of the second-largest classroom union said there was too little discipline at home and called on parents to back up teachers.

Jacqueline Simpson, a teacher from Leeds, told the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers conference in Scarborough: "Whatever happened to the culture of an extra wallop at home if you get told off at school. If parents are unable to take responsibility for their offspring, they should be made to, or be punished in some way that hurts."

Delegates backed a motion attacking parents for confusing "good parenting with total support of everything their children do or say".

The call for traditional values comes after repeated complaints about declining standards of behaviour and parenting. Teachers meeting over Easter have heard repeated warnings about verbal or physical assaults on staff by unruly pupils and even by their parents.

David Blunkett, the Secre-

tary of State for Education, told the NASUWT on Thursday that he shared their concerns and promised to be "as tough as nails" on parents who allowed their children to run wild.

Dave Batty, a member of the union's national executive, said: "Parents give children everything they want and don't tell them off. Parenting is not saying 'you can have everything you want and everything you do will be right'. Good parents take responsibility for their children and in doing that they put on restrictions."

Sue Rogers, a teacher from Sheffield, said she had heard of one child who arrived at a primary school only able to speak four words, because his parents had never talked to him. She also described looking after a child whose father was a doctor. "He came to me and he said 'I do not understand what you talk to her about. I never know what to say to her.' Isn't that sad, isn't that tragic? ... Parents have the major responsibility for bringing up their children and schools should not be expected to address their failings."

She attacked parents, claiming: "They come to the classroom and hit members of staff who tell their child off, telling the teacher that their child does not lie or hit other pupils, and won't believe what you tell them."

The latest PC ruling: Babar is a 'rhinoist'

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

BABAR the Elephant, a staple bedtime story, has been deemed politically incorrect.

Both King Babar and his wife, Queen Celeste, display Eurocentrism by wearing western clothes and the stories are seen as sexist with Celeste displaying a weak personality and appealingly conventional dress sense, never wearing trousers. The imperialist Babar is also guilty of "internalised racism" towards the Rhino kingdom.

These are the conclusions of Angela Anjila, a multiculturalism student at Simon Fraser University in Canada. The Rhinos, she explains, "are portrayed as ignorant, gruff, thick-headed and prone to violence, symbolising Eurocentric conceptions of ignorant, uncivilised African savages". But hers is just one contribution to an international academic debate on supposed anti-social messages emanating from children's favourite elephant. An-



Babar: not so much an elephant as an imperialist

other published attack is titled with staggering hyperbole: "Should We Burn Babar?"

The defence of Babar is being mounted by Kent State University in Ohio. It has the world's largest collection of Babar memorabilia, and its own Babar scholar, Professor Ann Hildebrand. She has written a book on Babar's creators, Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff, and describes Babar as "a wonderful teaching tool for many generations to come".

9 770951 948566

INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 • CROSSWORDS, TIME OFF P14, 28 • TELEVISION, THE EYE • FULL CONTENTS, P2

JEFF BRIDGES ★★★★★
"IN A PERFECT WORLD ALL MOVIES WOULD BE MADE BY THE COEN BROTHERS."
- LAM MATHIAS - EMPIRE

★★★★★
"ONE OF THE MOST PROFOUNDLY FUNNY FILMS YOU WILL SEE THIS YEAR."
- ROGER WOLLASTON - BRISTOL

JOHN GOODMAN ★★★★★
"AS GOOD AS ANYTHING THEY'VE EVER MADE."
- SCOTT WICKMAN - VICE

★★★★★
"SHOT THROUGH WITH PACY, EYES-GLAZED-TO-SCREEN COMPELLION."
- JIMMY KIMM - TOTAL FILM

KEVIN SPACEY ★★★★★
"AS GOOD AS ANYTHING THEY'VE EVER MADE."
- SCOTT WICKMAN - VICE

★★★★★
"SHOT THROUGH WITH PACY, EYES-GLAZED-TO-SCREEN COMPELLION."
- JIMMY KIMM - TOTAL FILM

FROM THE AWARD WINNING CREATORS OF 'FARGO'

A FILM BY EDWIN COEN & JERRE COEN

BIG LEBOWSKI

HER LIFE WAS IN THEIR HANDS. NOW HER TOE IS IN THE MAIL.

هكذا من الأصل

**Part Two of the
ultimate guide,
by Sophie Grigson
and William Black**



■ ADVERTISING WILL EAT ITSELF

The parody of the latest commercials

News
Foreign
Features
Arts
Obituaries
Leader & letters
Comment
Unit trusts
The back page
Sport
Crosswords
TV & radio

2-10
11-14
15
16
17
18
19
23
24
14-24
& 28
e Eye

Time Off, 14-24
Time Off, 14 & 28
The Eye

Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.



The group is headed by Bernadette Sands-McKevitt, the sister of Bobby Sands, the late IRA hunger striker. Speak-

man Mitchel McLaughlin said later that delegates could themselves decide to give their verdict this weekend.

Key location: Selling the news in Belfast next to the Europa Hotel where David Trimble speaks today Photograph: John Voos

Although the agreement was endorsed by the party executive by a two-thirds majority, it was rejected during the week by the Orange Order, the Young Unionists and the Queen's University Unionists.

lost from Antarctic ice sheets in the past two decades:

"The warming trend appears to be related to a reduction in sea ice. The question now is what is causing the reduction. At this point, we do not have enough evidence to find a smoking gun."

But he thinks the data may indicate a worrying trend. "Ice shelves appear to be good bellwethers for climatic change, since they respond to change within decades, rather than the years or centuries sometimes typical of other climate systems."

YOUR TRAVELODGE STAY INCLUDES • SPACIOUS EN-SUITE ROOMS • LUXURY HYPNOS BEDS • SATELLITE TV • ON-SITE RESTAURANT • FREE MORNING NEWSPAPER • TEA & COFFEE MAKING FACILITY • FAST CHECKOUT

Mr Nkwocha said an application to disinter the bodies was currently with Lambeth's operational services department and he expected a response in the next few weeks.

هكذا من الأحرار

Clapton leads addicts to the crossroads

By Phil Davison
in Antigua

ERIC CLAPTON loves Antigua. He has lived on the Caribbean island, on and off, for the past 15 years, the last 10 of them while "clean" of drugs and sober. The previous five were not so good, the wild final years of his decline towards the "rock bottom" of drug and alcohol addiction.

Antiguans stuck with him through the bad times, helping him when he was down, and respected his privacy when he returned from detox and needed his space. Now the guitar legend is giving something back to the island.

In a couple of months, Clapton will open the \$5m state-of-the-art Crossroads Rehabilitation Centre, the island's first treatment centre for addicts, on this secluded bay. It will treat mainly North Americans and Europeans, for \$9,000 (almost £6,000) a month, possibly including some of Clapton's friends, but reserve 12 of its 36 beds to help local Antiguan addicts for nothing.

The singer, who has not touched alcohol or drugs in 10 years, will visit the clinic regularly to share his own story during counselling sessions. In charge will be Toronto-born former nurse Anne Vance, who used to run the renowned Betty Ford rehab clinic in Palm Springs, California.

It will be "a Robin Hood-type thing", the taciturn singer-guitarist said in a rare recent interview on CNN's *Larry King Live*, which he gave specifically to publicise and seek funding for what had previously been a secretive venture. "I am primarily doing it for people who have no money that need treatment."

He is setting up foundations in the US and Britain which will organise concerts and other fundraising events to subsidise the Antiguan patients.

Like much of the Caribbean, Antigua is increasingly plagued by serious drug addiction problems, mostly involving crack cocaine. After US anti-narcotics agents squeezed traditional Colombian cartel smuggling routes through Mexico, the Colombians took to moving their wares by boat through Caribbean islands, often paying local smugglers in cocaine rather than cash.

"I have been in a recovery programme for the past 10 years," Clapton told reporters here during a recent visit to watch construction of the centre before starting a US tour. "I've had a long career of drink-



Clean hand: Clapton, who has not touched drink or drugs for 10 years, wants to help the people of Antigua after they helped him through the bad times

ing and drugging and I have received treatment in rehabilitation centres in America."

The singer started taking drugs in London at the age of 15. "There was everything a man could want and yet every night I would want to kill myself and I wanted to die," he said in the CNN interview.

"Internally I was falling to pieces... I had a grand mal seizure. Scared the living daylights out of me. Woke up in the hospital."

More than 120 local workers toiled feverishly yesterday to complete the sprawling, hurricane-proof Crossroads Centre, named after one of the guitarist's hit records, by July. Its first patients will move in by September, living two to a room

to prevent feelings of isolation, starting with detoxification then working on the 12-step principles of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The fittings are luxurious, the view past the swimming pool and across the sparkling turquoise water, to where Clapton has a luxury home at Indian Creek, spectacular. A few hundred yards along an unpaved road lie the ruins of Britain's first Antiguan settlement at Bridgetown. A little further on is the exclusive Mill Reef Club, where Jackie Onassis used to be among the winter residents.

"Eric loves it here because he can drive around the island alone in his old pick-up truck and no one bothers him. He just seems to blend in,"

said Hans Smit, a Dutch-born Antigua businessman and friend, whose altruistic Hourglass Foundation helped get the project under way four years ago, finding the land and liaising with the Antiguan government.

"He'll walk in here, maybe with a couple of friends, sit outside and order his favourite mineral water," said Everett "Mengalin" Francis, a bartender at Clapton's favourite restaurant, the Big Banana in the capital, St John's. "The locals don't bother him and they don't point him out to the cruise ship visitors."

A big American corporation, Transitional Hospitals Corp, was initially to build the centre but had a disagreement with the singer over

how it should function.

"They wanted it to be for very wealthy people. Eric saw it as much more angled towards helping Antiguanians," said Mr Smit. "It's very close to his heart."

Two years ago, Clapton met Anne Vance, who had left the Betty Ford Clinic and was working with the European Association for Treatment of Addicts (EATA), while he was doing volunteer work at a treatment centre in London. They decided to drop the American corporation and go it alone, the singer putting up the first \$5m with the new US and British foundations to raise future funds.

"We won't just treat the addiction," Ms Vance told *The Independent*.

"We want to improve the body, mind and spirit with relaxation techniques, massage, acupuncture, nutrition classes."

"When I first met Eric, I didn't recognise him. Then he told me it was his dream to help Antiguanians. This is very important to him. He told me 'I want to give back what recovery has given to me, a chance to live again'."

"He likes to do his work invisibly. He didn't want to sacrifice his privacy. He kept this top secret for the first couple of years but he had to go public with it for the sake of future funding. He's a very caring person. It's a joy to work with someone who's doing this from the heart."

Laser heart surgery doubts

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

DOCTORS in the United States were criticised yesterday for creating false hope in desperately ill patients by suggesting a laser gun that drills holes in the heart could offer a life-saving alternative to heart transplants.

With up to half of patients dying before they can get a heart transplant because of the shortage of donor organs, US researchers claim the technique of punching up to 50 holes in the wall of the heart to improve blood flow to oxygen starved muscle could save lives.

Dr Valluvan Jeevanandam, surgical director of the Heart Transplantation Program at Temple University Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, said: "This promising new therapy offers an alternative for patients with severe chest pain who may need a heart transplant."

Results of the research were presented at a meeting of the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation in Chicago, Illinois.

British specialists said the technique was still undergoing trials and would never help more than a small percentage of heart transplant patients, most of whom suffer from heart failure, which is a dysfunction of the pumping action of the heart. Candidates for the laser are mainly patients with ischaemic heart disease.

A trial of the technique, known as transmyocardial revascularisation, has been completed on 190 patients from Papworth hospital, Cambridge, using the heart laser at the nearby Bupa hospital, and follow up results are due next year. About 20 patients have also been treated at the Royal Brompton hospital, London.

Early indications are that the treatment is effective in most patients but the improvement wears off after one to two years.

Neil Moat, cardiovascular surgeon at the Royal Brompton, said: "Like a lot of new treatments it works to some extent but it needs modifying. I cannot see it having a major impact on the heart transplant waiting list."

A dogged lawyer's lawyer lost in the political jungle

IN THE NEWS

KENNETH STARR

THE MAN widely regarded as President Bill Clinton's nemesis yesterday intoned a warning that resounded all around Washington. "The end," Kenneth Starr told a gaggle of reporters on the steps of the US Court House, "is not in sight."

Thus did Mr Starr, independent prosecutor appointed four years ago to investigate charges of criminal wrongdoing by Mr Clinton, dash hopes that a judicial inquiry was near conclusion.

Mr Starr, 51, a high-flying lawyer with muted Republican credentials, has been elevated to villain-in-chief by the Clinton camp. When Hillary spoke three months ago of the "vast right-wing conspiracy" tout to "get" her husband, Mr Starr was one of the first she named.

Since he was named by the Attorney-General, Janet Reno, to take over the investigation, he has expanded his brief to include five inquiries and spent \$30m (£18m) of taxpayers' money. A technical investigation into whether Mr Clinton and/or his wife broke the law in relation to the Whitewater land deal in mid-Eighties Arkansas now encompasses charges that Mrs Clinton wrongly dismissed employees of the White House travel office, that the White House misused FBI files, that Mr Clinton "bought" the silence of former employees by resettling them in private-sector jobs, and finally - that Mr Clinton perjured himself and suborned perjury after an alleged affair



Kenneth Starr: Accused of orchestrating a right-wing plot against the Clintons

WORK AND FAMILY

"He's a strong family man, very involved in his church and community. On the other hand, he's capable of doing more work, more conscientiously, than anyone I know." Theodore Olson, friend and former colleague of Kenneth Starr.

BAD GUY

"The President privately sees that independent counsel Kenneth Starr is 'a very bad guy' and 'dangerous'. There's genuine concern, even if it weren't him in the cross hairs... that Ken Starr represents a danger in American life." Bob Woodward, Washington Post.

with a White House trainee.

Mr Starr's pursuit of this last inquiry, the Monica Lewinsky affair, has drawn attention to prosecutorial methods described by his detractors as "bullying" and "psychological torture". He authorised the "wiring" of Ms Lewinsky's confidante, Linda Tripp, to try to record incriminating details of her relationship with Mr Clinton, summoned Ms Lewinsky's tearful mother to testify against her daughter, and subpoenaed receipts of Ms Lewinsky's purchases from Washington bookshops.

For those looking for evidence of Mr Starr's crusading attitude, there is also Susan McDougal, a key witness in the Whitewater affair, who has been in prison a year for contempt because she refused to testify against the Clintons.

Among Washington Democrats and sympathetic journalists, the demonisation of Mr Starr is well advanced. Common wisdom is that he is driven by ideology and hatred of the Clintons. They note his previous posts: aide to President Reagan's first attorney-general, and solicitor-general for President Bush's Justice Department. Most recently, they cite a job offer from Pepperdine University, California, one of whose chief benefactors, the right-winger Richard Scaife, who commissioned articles from anti-Clinton reporters.

This week, stung by accusations that the six-month old job offer - as dean of the university's faculties of law and public policy - represented a conflict of interest and could jeopardise his job as inde-

pendent prosecutor, Mr Starr made public his letter declining the post. This clumsy public-relations effort by Mr Starr, however, pointed up another side to his character and one cited by those of his defenders who dare to put their heads above the parapet.

Mr Starr, they say, is a lawyer's lawyer, dogged, perhaps obsessive in his desire to see the law upheld (by everyone). From the strictly legal point of view, they say - and few disagree - he has barely put a foot wrong. Politically, though, it is another story. If he had set out to convince the nation he was on a right-wing crusade against the President, one reporter said, he could "hardly have outdone his own series of missteps and embarrassing revelations."

— Mary Dejevsky, Washington

*It only takes
a minute
to get 800
free.*

Set up a BT Freephone 0800 number before 12th July and take advantage of 800 free minutes and free connection. If you want to generate more business calls there is no excuse not to call us now on Freephone 0800 731 1811, quoting ref. no. 08IN01.

Call **Freefone 0800 731 1811**
or visit www.bt.com

BT

Why not change the way we work?

Equivalent to 767 minutes per month for the first three months on option 102. Connections by 51p/min. 12 month rental applies.

Bewitching Baebes excommunicated from 'Songs Of Praise'

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

THE BBC'S *Songs Of Praise* has banned the top-selling, all-female ensemble The Mediaeval Baebes after reports that the 12-strong group has engaged in white witchcraft.

The Mediaeval Baebes were to have pre-recorded a performance for the programme at St George's Church, Salisbury, this weekend for transmission on 26 April.

Now the producer of *Songs Of Praise*, Jeremy Kime, has booked a group of choirboys instead. Les Malloy, who acts for The Mediaeval Baebes concerning TV and radio appearances, said yesterday: "Jeremy Kime said to me he had seen reports about white witchcraft and didn't think it would be good publicity for a religious programme to be connected with it. I was very disappointed."

But a spokeswoman for the

programme said yesterday:

"The Mediaeval Baebes were one of a number of groups approached about possible *Songs Of Praise* recordings. But it was felt that parts of their repertoire in Latin and Italian weren't conducive to the programme. It wasn't particularly to do with witchcraft."

The programme has an audience of over 5 million, and yesterday a spokesman for the group said: "The group has done the church great service by introducing a wide public to a glorious body of sacred works. Now, it appears that the church's prime TV outlet has made a base and baseless decision to shun The Mediaeval Baebes."

The group, who appear in stinky, white dresses as part of their TV and stage act, record 14th-century religious and secular music.

Their debut album, *Salva Nox*, entered the classical album charts at number 2 last November, and has not been

out of the top five since.

The ensemble, which is drawn from several countries including the UK, are accomplished performers of choral music, but also owe their rapid fame to good looks and a calculated PR campaign in which they took delight in describing themselves with such phrases as "shameless harlots", "hard-core, full-on, Anglo-Saxon acid-mead mistresses of the Middle Ages music scene", and the girls who "put the E into Early Music".

Three of the Baebes are white witches. One of the Baebes, Rachel Van Asch, not a white witch herself, but interested in quantum physics and known as Quantum Baebe, said yesterday: "We are all interested in strange forces. Some of the Baebes do have an interest in healing and divination."

"There's nothing wrong with white witchcraft. We believe in tolerance and open-mindedness."



White-out: The Mediaeval Baebes, who style themselves as 'shameless harlots' and 'hard-core, full-on, Anglo-Saxon acid-mead mistresses', have been banned from *Songs of Praise* over reports of their enthusiasm for white witchcraft

Photograph: Rev Features

Mandelson admits slip-up in spinning

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

LABOUR'S spin-doctors "let the side down" in allowing Bernie Ecclestone's £1m donation to become a big story in the press, Peter Mandelson says this weekend.

In an apparent admission that the arch spin-doctor himself had made a rare slip-up, he suggested that Labour spokespeople had not acted quickly enough. On the other hand, his words could also be read as criticism of the press colleagues of the minister without portfolio.

In a documentary on Tony Blair's first year in power, Mr Mandelson worried that his party's famous spin-doctors did not work hard enough to keep the furore off the front pages. In the same programme, Channel 4's *Blair's Year* which will be shown tomorrow evening, frictions between Mr Mandelson and the Deputy Prime Minister became apparent. Mr Prescott admitted that the spin-doctors' role was leading to "tensions".

Asked about the Ecclestone affair, when the party was forced to return a donation after the government bowed to lobbying by the Formula One boss over a ban on tobacco sponsorship, Mr Mandelson suggested Labour spokesmen had not acted quickly enough.

"I think in a very real sense your celebrated spin-doctors, your media managers and all these people, in a sense we let the side down," he said.

Because the party had to consult Lord Neill, the chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and to ask

Mr Ecclestone whether he was willing to have his donation disclosed, the process had been slow, he suggested. In the meantime, the press had begun to feel that something was being held back from them.

In the film, Mr Prescott, said that at first Labour had operated as it had in opposition. "Make no mistake, this is creating certain problems. Spin-doctoring is about putting a political message to what might be a departmental one, and that's created tensions," he said.

John Monks, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, used the documentary to attack Labour's attempts to weaken its links with the unions. The party had turned to business donors instead but they tended to demand more in return, he said. The unions have donated £100m to Labour since 1979, but now gives less than half Labour's annual income.

"We did note with some wry amusement that if you get involved with the business community... they want something for their money. I think it arouses a lot more controversy than trade union money to the Labour Party ever did," he said.

The programme also highlighted an apparent difference between Mr Prescott and Robin Cook over proportional representation, with differing interpretations of Tony Blair's comment that he was "not persuaded" of the need for change. The Foreign Secretary suggested Mr Blair had a positive attitude to PR, while Mr Prescott commented: "The Prime Minister's said he's against proportional representation."

DAILY POEM

From 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol'

By Oscar Wilde

With sudden shock the prison-clock
Smote on the shivering air,
And from all the gaol rose up a wail
Of impotent despair,
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things
In the crystal of a dream,
We saw the greasy hangman rope
Hooked to the blackened beam,
And heard the prayer the hangman's snare
Strangled into a scream.

And all the woe that moved him so
That he gave that bitter cry,
And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,
None knew so well as I:
For he who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die.

This is our final selection from the expanded edition of the Penguin Classics anthology *Poetry of the 1890s* (Penguin, £8.99), edited by R. K. R. Thornton and Marion Thain. Wilde published his *Ballad* in 1898, the year after his release.

Every day, we put our
faith in something.

EVERY DAY, 35 MILLION PEOPLE PUT THEIR FAITH IN AXA.

Our families. Our health. Our homes. Our property. Our money. These things are important to people. The world over, because these things are our future. For over 100 years, AXA companies have been helping to guard people's futures. Today, we're one

AXA

35 million believe in us worldwide

www.axa.co.uk

This advertisement, which has been approved by AXA Sun Life Services plc, is issued by Sun Life and Primonial Holdings plc and the above information relates to the worldwide business of the AXA Group. AXA Sun Life Services plc and other members of the AXA Sun Life Marketing Group are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and/or IMRO for life assurance, pensions, unit trusts and investment services.

Snow
doc

Virgin
on B
no-fr

Whall to
er char

PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

FREE PRINTER WITH PC & SCANNER PACKAGE



ACER

233MHz Intel Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology. 16Mb SDRAM. 2.1Gb Hard Disk. 512k Cache Memory. 24 x Multimedia. 2Mb Graphics. 33.6K Data/Fax modem. Includes Works, Tomb Raider SE and 4 other top software titles. MODEL: Acros P233MMX.

PLUS Primax Colorado D600 Colour Flatbed Scanner.

PACKAGE PRICE

£999

9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

PC, PRINTER & SCANNER PACKAGE

PACKARD BELL

200MHz Intel Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology. 16Mb EDO RAM. 2.1Gb Hard Disk. 256k Cache memory. 20 x Multimedia with speakers. 2Mb PCI Graphics. 14" SVGA monitor. FREE over £1000 worth of software.* Total Separate Selling Price £974.99. MODEL: 9030.

PLUS Canon BJC4300 Scan Colour inkjet printer and scanner in-one.

PACKAGE PRICE

£899

9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

SAVE
OVER
£70



FREE FLATBED SCANNER WITH PC & PRINTER PACKAGE



SAVE
OVER
£100

PACKARD BELL

233MHz Intel Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology. 32Mb SDRAM. 4.3Gb Hard Disk. 256k Cache Memory. 24 x multimedia with speakers and subwoofer. 2Mb 3D Graphics. 14" SVGA monitor. FREE OVER £1000 WORTH OF SOFTWARE.* Total Separate Selling Price £1404.99. MODEL: 9030.

PLUS LEXMARK C17000 Photo Quality Printer Up to 1200 x 1200 dpi resolution.

PACKAGE PRICE

£1299

9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FREE
SCANNER

MODEL: Primax Colorado D600.

PC WORLD
THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE CALL 0990 464 464

- | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|---------|-------|------------|-----------|------------|---------|-----------|
| ABERDEEN | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |
| BIRMINGHAM | BIRMINGHAM | GLASGOW | LEEDS | MANCHESTER | MILWAUKEE | NOTTINGHAM | PRESTON | STOCKPORT |

Ripper fans take stab at naming evil Jack

By Kim Sengupta

THE VENUE is the Friendly Hotel in the suburb of Bowthorpe, in peaceful Norwich. Ninety men and women were discussing murder, dismemberment, Freemasonry and the royal family. Among those due to be taking part was Jeremy Beadle.

To outsiders it may seem surreal but for delegates at the seminar it is deadly serious: after three days of wading through bodies, gore and en-trails, they hope to be closer to identifying Jack The Ripper. In the process, it is predicted, backs will be stabbed, Ripperology reputations slashed to bits and red herrings netted and disposed of. Others attending will be Donald Rumbelow, author of *The Complete Jack The Ripper*, and Nick Warren, editor of the magazine *Rippermania*, through which enthusiasts can keep abreast of sightings of the latest theories for £6 a year. Rosemarie Howell, an organiser of the conference, says: "This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are a lot of people fascinated by the subject; there is huge worldwide interest in Jack The Ripper."

Those attending are a cross-section of ages and sexes. Some are said to be embarrassed about their obsession and can only be frank among kindred spirits. The Ripper is believed to have committed five murders between August and November 1888 in the East End of London. The victims, prostitutes, had their throats slashed and were mutilated.

Suspects and motives were thrown up, ranging from demented reformers who wanted to highlight deprivation in the slums of the capital, to a conspiracy embracing the government, Freemasons and the then royal physician.

This scenario, presented by Stephen Knight in his book *Jack The Ripper: The Final Solution*, involved Queen Victoria's grandson, Albert, heir-presumptive to the throne, fathering a child by a Catholic commoner. Four prostitutes found out and tried to blackmail the government.



The Duke of Clarence, another possible Ripper candidate

Photograph: Hulton Getty

The Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, turned to the royal physician and fellow Mason Sir William Gull, who killed the blackmailers, a fifth victim being mistaken identity. The mutilations carried out were according to Masonic rituals.

The Salisbury-Gull conspiracy theory has been attacked by other experts, including Mr Rumbelow and Donald McCormick. Rival claimants to the Jack The Ripper title include another

member of the royal family, the Duke of Clarence, Aaron Kosminski, a Polish Jew, and an upholsterer, James Kelly, both of whom got syphilis from prostitutes.

In 1993 the author Shirley Harrison said she had found the diaries of the Ripper, who was an arsenic-addicted Liverpool cotton merchant called James Maybrick. It was "the completely spontaneous outpouring of someone going through hell." Brian May-

brick, a descendant of the alleged Ripper, said: "We always knew James Maybrick was the black sheep of the family, but we never knew it was anything like this." He need not have worried overmuch: the diaries were dismissed as a hoax. So the search goes on. Maybrick may not have been The Ripper but those at Norwich will appreciate the family motto he adopted: *Tempus omnia revelat* - Time reveals all.

Persistent Paxman shortlisted

TELEVISION interviewer Jeremy Paxman's grilling of a Government minister in which he asked the same question 14 times has been shortlisted for a major award, it emerged yesterday.

The broadcaster repeatedly pressed Michael Howard, Home Secretary at the time, on BBC2's *Newsnight*.

The interview has now been nominated in the interview of the year category for the Royal Television Society's Television, Sports and Journalism Awards.

It is up against two other BBC entries: David Dimbleby's pre-election *Panorama* interview with Tony Blair and John Humphrys' quizzing of the Prime Minister in *On The Record* about the furor surrounding tobacco advertising in Grand Prix racing.

The Paxman interview was even praised by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, whose department is responsible for media matters, saying the presenter was "at his quizzical best" during the interview.

In the television journalist of the year award category, BBC reporters Denis Murray and Ben Brown have made the shortlist, along with ITN's Michael Brunson.

For the news event award ITN, BBC and Sky News have been nominated for their coverage of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Ewen Murray and Bruce Critchley (BSkyB), Richie Benaud (BBC) and Murray Walker and Martin Brundle (MACH 1 for ITV network) have been selected in the sports commentator category.

The Awards ceremony takes place on 14 May.

Child killer seeks safety in new unit

By Ian Burrell

CHILD killer Sidney Cooke has been moved out of the London police station where he has been held since his release from prison ten days ago, Scotland Yard said yesterday.

A spokesman said he was "no longer the responsibility of the Metropolitan police service". He refused to say where Cooke had been taken, but sources indicated he would be held by another police force for the time being.

The paedophile has asked to be held in a secure unit for his own protection, like another member of his child abuse gang, Robert Oliver, who is staying at a private unit in Milton Keynes, which said yesterday it would not be taking Cooke as well.

Cooke, who celebrates his 71st birthday today, was released on 6 April after serving nine years of a 16-year term for the manslaughter of teenage runaway Jason Swift.

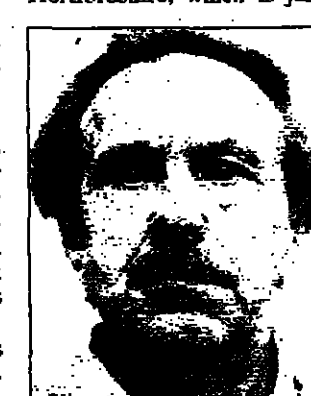
When the Met took Cooke into one of their stations - thought to be Leman Street in east London - they said he would be held there until "suitable long-term" accommodation could be found. They emphasised that a police station was not seen as suitable.

But crowds of protesters have gathered outside the Leman Street station, which is used as a base for traffic wardens and is close to a primary school.

A sign saying "paedophile protector" was hung over the station's nameplate and pro-

testers promised to remain until Cooke was moved. One of the protesters, mother Lisa Ayris, 38, said: "We don't just want him out of here... I would like to see him locked up again."

Last week Carlton TV's *London Today* programme claimed that a cell block at Chestnut police station in Hertfordshire, which is just



Cooke: moved out of London police station

within the Met's area, was being refurbished, possibly to hold Cooke. The Met police then issued a denial that there were any plans to move him.

Yesterday Paul Cavadino, director of the Penal Reform Consortium, said he hoped that Cooke had been moved to a secure hospital. "He needs somewhere secure and supervised in order to protect the public and to protect him from vigilante attacks," he said. But as a free man, Cooke is entitled to ignore police advice and demand to go wherever he likes, although he would be under surveillance.

Lottery show 'faces axe'

By Paul McCann
Media Editor

THE BBC faces the embarrassment of radically revamping its controversial National Lottery scratchcard show after poor ratings and a fall in scratchcard sales.

The BBC attracted criticism from MPs and the culture, media and sport select committee chairman Gerald Kaufman for appearing to encourage scratchcard sales when it unveiled its *Big Ticker* show. To get on the show or to play at home the public needed to buy a TV Dreams scratchcard.

Now there are persistent rumours emerging from the Corporation that the format of the show is to be changed and that some executives would even like to see it axed. A spokeswoman said yesterday: "We don't have any plans to axe the show. But it is a live show and we are always looking at the format of it to see what works."

Last week's show, the third *Big Ticker*, attracted an audience of 7.2m viewers, well down on the old-style programme's heyday when it regularly attracted audiences over 10m.

The BBC and Camelot have suffered an onslaught of bad publicity over the *Big Ticker*. This week it was discovered that scratchcard sales had actually fallen to their lowest ever despite the show and advertising campaign.

There have also been stories of the studio audience for the show walking out bored because of the length of the recording, making the cameras move around the remaining audience so the studio will look full on screen.

UP TO 12 MONTHS
INTEREST FREE
OPTION
WITH NO DEPOSIT ON ALL
PRODUCTS OVER £250

ALL PC'S WE SELL ARE GUARANTEED
YENKAM COMPLIANT
BRITISH STANDARDS BS2000-1

BASED ON CURRENT SELLING PRICES OF ACTUAL OR EQUIVALENT TITLES (EXCLUDING OTHERS AND MANUALS FOR PRE-LOADED SOFTWARE).
*10% OFF ALL PC'S AND PERIPHERALS WHEN PURCHASING THE PC WORLD COMPUTER SUPERSTORE. ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT. OFFER ONLY ON PC'S AND PERIPHERALS. NOT ON SOFTWARE. NOT ON TV'S. NOT ON CONSOLES. NOT ON TABLETS. NOT ON MONITORS. NOT ON KEYBOARDS. NOT ON MICE. NOT ON SCANNERS. NOT ON PRINTERS. NOT ON FAXES. NOT ON MODEMS. NOT ON ROUTERS. NOT ON SWITCHES. NOT ON HUBS. NOT ON CABLES. NOT ON ADAPTERS. NOT ON COILS. NOT ON SPEAKERS. NOT ON HEADPHONES. NOT ON KEYCHAINS. NOT ON MUGS. NOT ON T-SHIRTS. NOT ON POSTERS. NOT ON BOOKS. NOT ON CD'S. NOT ON DVD'S. NOT ON BLU-RAY'S. NOT ON VIDEO'S. NOT ON MUSIC. NOT ON GAMES. NOT ON TOYS. NOT ON FOOD. NOT ON DRINKS. NOT ON TRAVEL. NOT ON ACCOMMODATION. NOT ON TRANSPORT. NOT ON INSURANCE. NOT ON FINANCE. NOT ON LEGAL. NOT ON MEDICAL. NOT ON EDUCATION. NOT ON EMPLOYMENT. NOT ON RETIREMENT. NOT ON TAX. NOT ON ACCOUNTS. NOT ON BUSINESS. NOT ON PERSONAL. NOT ON FAMILY. NOT ON FRIENDS. NOT ON NEIGHBOURS. NOT ON STRANGERS. NOT ON THE WORLD.

هنا من الأجر

ake stab
vil Jack



Snow surgery is cure for doctor's peak obsession

DR SUNDEEP had professional duties again this morning, filling three more slits in his fingers with Super Glue and then seeking out a couple of Sherpas with chesty coughs to whom he wanted to lend a stethoscope. Aged 28, Sundeep Dhillon aims to become the youngest person to stand on the highest summit on each of the seven continents. Everest will complete his tally. But he wears this personal ambition lightly and as a climber, medic and our most computer-handy member is the epitome of a team player.

A doctor may not be a legal requirement for an Everest expedition, but it is certainly a comfort to have one along. Sundeep had to dose people with gut infections and viruses on the trek in, and earlier this week may have set some sort of record when he had to perform a tricky piece of dentistry kneeling in the snow at Camp One, just above the Khumbu Icefall.

Both Sundeep, doing only his third dental operation, and Rob Owen, now recovered, wondered whether a tooth had been filled at an altitude of more than 6,000m before.

Turning to my fraying finger ends, some of the bloody slits that have occurred as a result of the dry mountain air have healed, but three more have had to be subject to the standard treatment - Super Glue in the slit, squeeze it tight, then bind with duct tape.

Sundeep is a doctor with 23 Parachute Field Ambulance, part of the Royal Army Medical Corps, celebrating its cen-



STEPHEN GOODWIN
Everest Diary

Base Camp

tenary this year. Apart from our guides, he is probably the most experienced of our Himalayan Kingdoms team and in 1996 got within 500m of the summit of Everest, climbing from the Tibetan side. It was a season of tragedy on the mountain and one female friend of Sundeep cried for three days fearing that the doctor was among the dead.

In fact, tragedy really brought Sundeep to mountaineering. Both his Indian-born parents died when he was 13 years old. A teacher suggested he go hill walking, and despite the dismissive comments of friends who said he would see nothing but rain and mist, the boy took to it. "They were right about the rain, but it allowed me to escape from the world of trusts and estates and all the mess I had to deal with," he said.

Exploration vied with medicine at Oxford where his dean, Professor John Leatham, told him, "well, you can keep going away so long as you keep coming back and passing exams".

As a lure, Himalayan King-

doms offer a discount to doctors on the £25,000 cost of Everest. Although Sundeep has a couple of sponsors, he has borne most of the cost himself. A bank overdraft of £55,000 is testimony to the young captain's love of expeditioning. He finds no conflict between his own ambitions on the mountain and being a doctor, even when the person in need might be on another team or, as in 1996, a yak-man with a badly burnt foot.

"There are some doctors who can divorce themselves from it and say for the next three months I'm not on call, but even without the discount I feel a moral obligation to do what I can," he said.

Sundeep put together a medical kit filling a 60-litre barrel and a large chest. He has liaised with doctors and medical

officers on other teams to try to ensure that vital equipment is sensibly distributed between the camps up the mountain.

Besides our immediate health, he also keeps a close eye on our "group dynamics". I suppose we all do, but it is a sensitive subject. "There are people here who haven't got a chance and there are people who are so highly driven that it scares me," Sundeep certainly does not put me in the latter category.

"The rest of us are fully determined to stand on the top," he said, perhaps misreading my own developing intentions. "But the summit party will self-select and it is in the interests of the team that those who aren't going to make it are honest with themselves. When it comes to decision time, it is just a leap of rock."



Cold comfort: The expedition's doctor, Sundeep Dhillon, carrying out emergency dental work on Rob Owen just above the Khumbu Icefall, at 6,000m
Photograph: Taken by Stephen Goodwin with a Fuji D5300 digital camera

Virgin takes on BA in no-frills fight

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

RICHARD BRANSON'S low-cost European airline, Virgin Express, is set to take on British Airways by launching head-to-head services competing with Go, BA's no-frills carrier.

Virgin Express will begin by launching flights from Stansted airport in Essex to Rome, Milan and Madrid via Brussels for £49 one-way. Go, which also flies from Stansted, operates direct to the same Italian destinations from £100 return.

Mr Branson's airline is also set to buy Sabre Airways, a small Gatwick-based charter carrier, for £6m this month. This will be used to launch another cut-price service, Virgin Sun, which will carry sun-seekers three times a day to Mediterranean destinations such as Crete.

The new Virgin services from Stansted will be run jointly with Sabena, Belgium's state airline. Starting on 17 May, passengers can take three flights a day to Brussels where connecting flights can take travellers on to European destinations.

"The fares are only slightly cheaper than Go's but with BA's operation you have to book a return," said Will Whitehorn, a director of Virgin Group.

However, a spokesman for Go said its customers were different to Virgin's. "They are

talking about changing at Brussels, we are offering direct turn-up-and-go travel."

The war is set to escalate as Virgin Express is likely to move its entire operations to Stansted from Belgium if union disputes and high operating costs continue to hamper the company's growth. Other airports that might also be used by Virgin to fly to the Continent include Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham.

Many people mocked Mr Branson's plan to offer cheap fares in Europe, but he has been proved spectacularly right. Virgin Express now has 21 planes - having started with only 6 - and shares in the carrier are now worth \$25 (on the American stock exchange), up from an initial flotation price of \$15.

The deregulated skies over Europe have seen an unprecedented scramble for destinations by low-cost carriers. After the launch of Go earlier this month, KLM UK, which also operates from Stansted, started a 279 Saver fare to Milan.

EasyJet, which operates from Luton, has been so incensed by BA's move that it has lodged a High Court writ against the former state airline. James Rothnie, however, a spokesman for EasyJet, welcomed Virgin's arrival. "Virgin Express is not a dominant player and will not distort the market," he said.

Southall train crash driver charged

A MANSLAUGHTER charge was yesterday brought against the driver of the passenger train involved in the Southall rail crash in which seven people died.

Larry Harrison, 51, was at the controls of the Swansea-London express train which collided with an empty freight train in west London on 19 September last year.

He will appear at Ealing magistrates court in west London on 27 May. British Transport Police said.

Mr Harrison was on police bail for some months, although no charges had been brought until yesterday. British Transport Police said the manslaughter

charge had been brought after advice from the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Great Western train from Swansea was only a few minutes outside Paddington station, west London, when the collision occurred.

A public inquiry into the crash, in which more than 150 people were injured, was opened in February. But it was adjourned because of possible legal action.

Lew Adams, general secretary of the train drivers' union Aslef said he was "surprised and dismayed" at the charge. The union is to support the driver throughout the legal action.

PORTSMOUTH TO CHERBOURG IN MINUS TWO HOURS.



NEW 'SUPERSTAR EXPRESS'

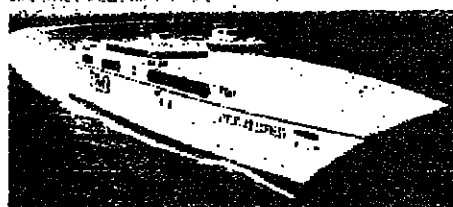
Well, minus 2 hours and 15 minutes to be exact. When you travel onboard P&O European Ferries' new 'SuperStar Express' direct from Portsmouth.

A luxurious catamaran that slashes the traditional 5 hour crossing to Normandy, almost in half. And while you're cutting a dash across the Channel, you can relax by sinking into one of 900 comfortable seats, each with built-in sound systems linked to

overhead video displays. You can go mad duty-free shopping, or enjoy a slow drink from the bar. Naturally there's delicious food to try and Club

Class facilities for high flyers. We think you'll agree, the 'SuperStar Express' is the most relaxing way to cut across to France.

For reservations call 0990 980 555. For brochures call our hotline on 0870 9000 212.



PORTSMOUTH

direct to CHERBOURG - ONLY 2 HRS 45 MINS

P&O
European Ferries

A brush with the law for artist selling sex

By Kate Watson-Smyth

IT STARTED with a media frenzy and the strong suspicion of an tacky, elaborate hoax. By yesterday afternoon the organisers of an "art for sex" exhibition looked to have attracted as much attention as they wanted. And then perhaps a little too much, as they were warned they could be facing heavy fines or imprisonment.

The delightfully entitled "Fuckart and Pimp" took place at the Decima Gallery where "artist" Angela Marshall intended to allow people in one at a time as she painted. The resulting "art" was to be consumed before Ms Marshall would sell it. A small picture was £25 plus the small matter of some oral sex, a medium one was £50 plus straight sex and for £75 it was a large painting and "anything kinky".

At the gallery in an unlikely south east London location early yesterday, Ms Marshall fluttered her eyelashes and preened for the cameras as the phone rang non-stop with calls from across Europe. Media men (they were mostly men) jostled for position in the tiny gallery, but there were no punters.

One of the few non-media types, known only as Nick, had come not to take part but to



watch through a peep hole for £5. "I am doing social studies at Poly and I want to see what this is all about," he said.

Ms Marshall insisted she was "totally up for it" and appeared to be revelling in all the attention from the press. But as the punters stayed away it began to look increasingly like a scam to fool the newspapers.

Alex Chappel, the curator of Decima, denied it was a hoax. His protests were undermined somewhat by the fact that he has previously organised two other escapades designed to fool the press. Yesterday he insisted his latest enterprise was real and complained that the media were scaring off clients.

But just as everyone was giving up hope of anything happening, along came Mark Childs, buying for a collector.

other man. "Nick" and his colleague were undercover officers from Southwark Council.

Mr Chappel was warned that he was committing an offence under the 1982 Miscellaneous Provisions Act - put simply he was running a sex encounters venue without a licence. "We warned them that they were committing an offence and told them we would keep an eye on them and it is possible that legal proceedings will follow," the official said.

Meanwhile, Ms Marshall and Mr Childs emerged. "We have art" she declared brandishing a canvas covered in uninspiring scribbles and daubed with the somewhat telling slogan, "media c***s".

Whatever the truth of the matter only one question remained as an incongruous sense of anti-climax settled over those left behind - was it Art?



The buyer leaving Decima Gallery in Bermondsey yesterday after having sex with the artist Angela Marshall, a contract which drew the attention of officials from Southwark council (above left). Photograph: Nicola Hurst

Two child prisoners guarded by 100 staff

ONE hundred staff turned up for work yesterday for the opening of a controversial child prison - and look after just two young tearaways, the Home Office said.

Medway in Kent is the country's first secure training centre but it has already provoked fears that the £2,500-a-week regime will simply create a "college of crime".

The centre, run by Group 4, will eventually house up to 40 "trainees" - aged between 12 and 14. They will serve between three months and a year.

Ironically, as the unit opened for business, the Home Office launched a search for advisers to help ensure it stays largely empty.

The Youth Justice Board of England and Wales will advise on nationwide programmes to cut offending by young people.

The chair will get up to £48,000 a year for a three-day

week and the other 11 members will be paid £136 a day for three days work a month.

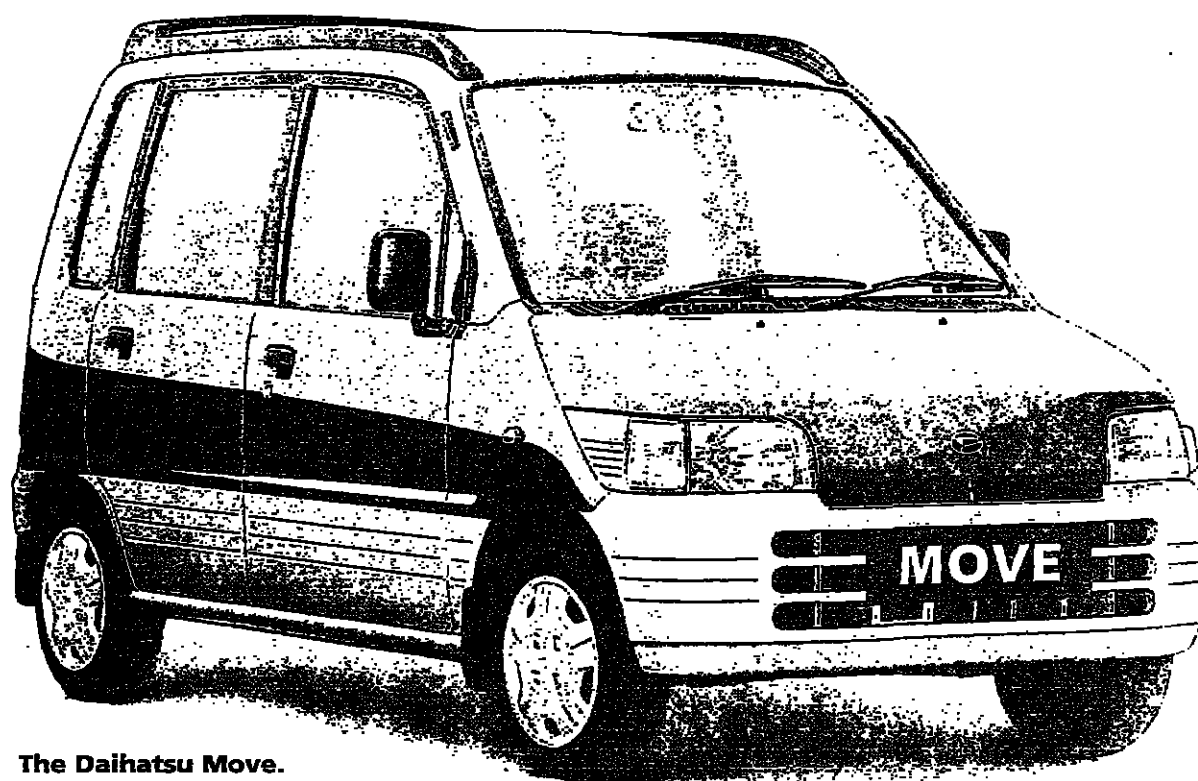
The board will help set up local youth offending teams which will co-ordinate the work of police and local authorities in fighting juvenile crime. It will also highlight ways of cutting delays in dealing with young criminals. The board, due to be up and running by October, will cost £1m a year to run.

Meanwhile, social workers and probation officers working with difficult children called on Jack Straw, the Home Secretary to end the "madness" of the new secure training centres.

The National Association for Youth Justice said conditions at Medway STC would "make difficult children worse."

"They will breed anger and resentment leading to disaffection throughout adolescence," warned committee member Charles Bell.

Free automatic? Free air conditioning? (Refer to house decision maker.)



The Daihatsu Move.
From £7,230 on the road.

The Daihatsu Move now comes with the option of free automatic upgrade or free air conditioning. So while your other half is considering which to go for, consider what else you'll get: a unique tall body design, 5 doors, driver's airbag, side impact bars, 53 mpg and a three year unlimited mileage warranty. All from £113* per month at 11% APR for the Move.

You have until the end of May. So call 0800 618 618 when you're ready.

THE MOVE

CLEVER CARS FROM JAPAN

Daihatsu Move £7,230 on the road. Price correct at time of going to press & includes VAT, delivery, number plates & 12 months' road fund licence. Finance example: Deposit £1,500. Followed by 36 monthly payments of £113 and final payment of £3,040. Total amount payable £18,668. 11% APR. Agreed contract: mileage 6,000 miles per annum. 260 acceptance fee payable with first payment. £40 credit facility fee included in last payment. Applicants for credit must be at least 18 & a UK resident (incl. Channel Islands) & title of Main Credit facility provided, subject to status by Inhouse Financial Services Ltd. 11% House, City Road, Chester CH1 3JL. *Finch quotations on request. APR varies depending on deposit, length of agreement and agreed contract mileage. If you exceed the agreed contract mileage there will be an excess charge of 50p per mile. Fuel economy: urban 39.7 mpg, extra urban 53.3 mpg, combined 47 mpg. For full details...

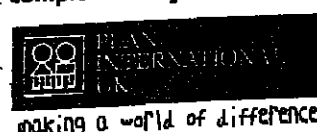
Sponsor a child and make a difference

Samir is only 5 years old, but his future already looks bleak. He has to fight for everything - food, a place to sleep, even a simple drink of water.

The heartbreaking fact is that there are millions of other children in the developing world just like Samir. But you can make a real difference.

By sponsoring a child through PLAN, one of the world's leading development charities, you can help us provide them and their community with whatever they need most - from clean water to a school or safe place to live. In return, you can build a rewarding relationship with your sponsored child through letters, photos and progress reports.

For more information about child sponsorship, complete the coupon below or call 0800 1389 130.



email: mail@plan-international.org.uk
Website: www.plan-international.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 219025

Share in the joy of child sponsorship with PLAN International.

Request your free information pack now!

0800 1389 130

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other (Please delete)

Surname Forename(s)

Address Postcode

Telephone No.

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Return this coupon to: PLAN International UK, FREEPOST,
5-6 Underhill Street, LONDON NW1 0YL

UK plutonium stocks doubled in last decade

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

PLUTONIUM stocks in Britain have doubled in the past 10 years, an analysis of official figures has revealed. While imports of the radioactive substance have averaged around 2,000 kilograms a year, exports stand at just 200kg a year.

The revelation will cause new fears at a time when pressure is growing on the Government to decide on the future of its nuclear material stores.

One of the last acts of the Conservative government was to cancel plans for a huge underground repository at Sellafield in Cumbria. Although a House of Lords committee is investigating the nuclear waste problem as part of a defence review, there have been few indications of how this government intends to tackle the problem.

Figures compiled by Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, show that while Britain held 48.5 tonnes of plutonium on 31 March 1988, it held 96.5 tonnes on the same date in 1997. "We are building a plutonium mountain..." he

said. "There seems to be no strategy and it is irresponsible in the extreme to continue to accumulate just about the most dangerous substance on earth in these quantities," he said.

Much of the plutonium is processed at Sellafield. British Nuclear Fuels Limited has applied for a licence to start a £300m factory which would turn the reprocessed plutonium into nuclear fuel.

Most of Britain's civil stock of plutonium is held behind razor wire in a bunker at Sellafield, along with some of the military stock. The rest of the military plutonium is held at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston. A recent report compiled by a Labour MP and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament predicted that Aldermaston would run out of space to store radioactive by-products from the Trident nuclear programme by 2002.

At Westminster, 136 MPs have signed an Early Day Motion expressing concern at the increasing stockpiles of plutonium in the UK and around the world. Britain needs a clear policy on how to deal with the

material, it argues, calling for a full public debate on the potential health, environment and proliferation risks posed by the stockpile.

William Peden, parliamentary officer of CND, echoed the demand. The figures published by the Government only covered the civil stockpile, he said. "The big, unanswered question is how much military stockpile the Government has."

A spokesman for BNFL said that since 1976 all its reprocessing contracts with overseas customers had specified that the materials would be sent back. However, some of the operations took several years.

"It is not as if this material is just going to stay here," he said. "The plutonium that is stored can be stored safely. A recent report by the Royal Society said we did that very well."

A spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry said it was up to the owners of the spent fuel, Magnox Electric, British Energy and BNFL, to choose how to manage it.

"Stocks of plutonium... all need to be safely and securely stored and used," he said.



Art attack: Top graffiti artist Pulse, right, in front of a recent piece of work at the Acklam adventure playground under the Westway in north Kensington, London. With the help of seven other artists the work was completed in 20 hours
Photograph: Adrian Dennis

Police woman's killer sent to Rampton

THE KILLER of policewoman Nina Mackay was yesterday sent indefinitely to Rampton top security mental hospital by a judge at the Old Bailey.

Magdi Elgizouli, 30, a paranoid schizophrenic, had pleaded not guilty to the murder of 25-year-old PC Mackay in October last year, but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

PC Mackay, from Essex, was stabbed as she and colleagues went to arrest Elgizouli, who is unemployed, at a flat in Stratford, east London.

She was taken to hospital after being wounded but died despite a desperate fight to save her. The young officer had served with the Metropolitan force for five years.

PC Mackay and other colleagues forced entry into the premises as part of a police operation to arrest the defendant, who was in breach of bail conditions.

The Recorder of London, Sir Lawrence Verney QC, in sentencing the defendant, told him: "Magdi Elgizouli, you have pleaded guilty to causing the death of a very promising young police officer whom everyone has spoken with pride and affection."

"If you are beginning to realise what it is you have done then you will indeed be feeling great remorse."

The judge made an order that the defendant be detained and treated at Rampton and a

further order restricting his discharge without limit of time.

Flanked by five security officers and dressed in a striped shirt, Elgizouli stood impassively in the dock as the judge made his orders.

Members of his victim's family sat in the public gallery.

The judge told Elgizouli: "At the time when you did it, all the

you could not realise that you were indeed a very ill man."

He added: "All the doctors who have reported are unanimous, both as to your condition and as to the way in which it should now be treated."

"It can only be treated in a very secure hospital, and accommodation is available at Rampton. That being said I shall make an order under section 37 of the Mental Health Act that you be detained and treated at Rampton Hospital and a further order under section 41 of the Act restricting your discharge without limit of time."

"It will, in the first place, be up to the doctors to determine when and if it is safe for you to be discharged and then either for [government] or a tribunal to determine when you should be discharged."

"The court has no control over that. The court can only draw attention to the very considerable history here and to the obvious need for the utmost care."

The victim's father, who lives in Loughton, Essex, and spent 35 years in the police force, said: "Her death was needless. She was only doing her duty."

He added: "I wanted her to do something else but she was a very determined young lady. I always feared for her life after she enlisted. She joined the police because of the challenge it offered."



Nina Mackay: Promising young police officer

evidence shows that you were suffering from a disease of the mind, that you had paranoid schizophrenia and have suffered from that illness for a very long time."

"You were in a position where it depended on you alone to take the medication that was prescribed and you did not take it because part of the effect of the disease was that

Gamekeeper turns poacher as BBC man plots Auntie's abolition

By David Walker

A BBC economics correspondent, given time off to write a book, has repaid the favour by producing a blueprint for the corporation's abolition, identifying it as part of the "Leviathan" of big government.

In *Public Spending*, to be published next month under the imprimatur of the free-market think tank the Social Market Foundation (SMF), the economics specialist Evan Davis - frequently to be seen on the *Newsnight* on BBC2 - says the BBC will soon have to "face its reckoning". He hints that the programme of internal reforms by John Birt, the director-general, has been self-defeating and argues strongly for pay-per-view funding for television.

"We require fairly compelling new arguments for the maintenance of a licence-fee system that was introduced in a completely different age," Mr Davis writes. "Technology

is providing a good reason for collective finance through taxation to diminish."

Mr Davis also tempts fate by wondering aloud whether the BBC should be allowed to lobby the Government on broadcasting policy. "If the BBC," he writes, "knows more about broadcasting than the rest of us, it is justified in informing us of policy changes. Yet yielding to [its] opinion involves subverting the national interest."

BBC rules state that its correspondents should not engage in outside activities which call into question their editorial impartiality. Mr Davis said his book was "intellectual, not subliminal" and denied that the SMF was right-wing. Its chair is, however, the Tory peer Lord Skidelsky and in his introduction Mr Davis credits Danny Filkenstein, former director of the SMF and now head of the research department at Conservative Central Office. Among economics specialists

Mr Davis is renowned for his high intelligence but also for his ideological standpoint. The contrast he uses in the new book between those who use economic logic and those "who are simply morally highly strung" is considered typical.

The SMF attracted controversy two years ago when it accused BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme of conniving with advocates of extra public spending. Its "study" was enthusiastically taken up by the Tories.

For Mr Davis, public spending is too big, badly organised and likely to corrupt the functioning of free markets. The National Health Service should be dismantled if not privatised, councils restricted to providing parks and maintaining roads and vouchers introduced for parents of school-age children. Advocates of the renationalisation of railways are severely reproved - aversion to profit-making by privatised rail companies make no sense, he says.

Dixons

PRICE CHECK

WE CAN'T BE BEATEN

Every week we check the prices of hundreds of products in the national press to make sure that Dixons Price Check prices can't be beaten.

ALL INCLUSIVE 1 YEAR PACKAGE ONLY £179.99*

FROM **one 2 one**

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- FREE AN EXTRA 3 MONTHS LINE RENTAL (15 MONTHS FOR THE PRICE OF 12)**
- MOTOROLA GRAPHITE DIGITAL MOBILE PHONE**
- 12 MONTHS LINE RENTAL AND CONNECTION**
- FREE LOCAL WEEKEND CALLS****
- SAVE OVER £115†**

MOTOROLA GRAPHITE DIGITAL MOBILE PHONE

- Up to 180 minutes talktime/45 hours standby time.
- 99 name and number memory.
- Fax and data compatible.
- Caller identification.

Dixons Deal £179.99*

one 2 one
FREE VOICEMAIL ON ALL SERVICES

- 95% of Great Britain's population now covered.
- Free Voicemail - pick up your messages for free in Great Britain.
- Digital call security.
- Low off-peak call rate only 10p including VAT per minute.

Dixons

There's a Great Deal going on

ON-LINE SHOP: www.dixons.co.uk

*If you find the same product cheaper locally, please let us know immediately, we will be pleased to refund the difference, but only within 7 days of purchase. The product must be new, complete and available for immediate delivery. Mail order prices exclude.

شركة من الامارات

Front to stand by cash sweetener for French babies

By Adam Lebor
in Paris

MUNICIPAL officials in a French town controlled by the anti-immigrant National Front yesterday said they planned to carry on paying cash bonuses to native French and European Union couples who have a baby, in spite of the fact that such payments have been declared illegal by a court.

The administrative court in Marseilles said the 5,000-franc (about £500) bonus, aimed at encouraging childbirth but openly discriminating against non-Europeans, was illegal as it broke a constitutional principle that recipients of state aid must receive equal treatment.

The Movement Against Racism (MRAP), which had challenged the legality of the bonus offered by Vitrolles mayor Catherine Mégret, welcomed the court ruling. It described the bonus as "a shameful and humiliating embezzlement of taxes" and said the court's decision showed the National Front's policy of "national preference" was illegal and called into question the legality of the party itself. So far about 30 families have received the money.

One bonus has been returned because the family received unwelcome publicity, said a spokeswoman for the mayor's office. The payments would continue while the town hall appealed, she added.

Mrs Mégret pledged an immediate fightback against the court decision. "We deplore the decision of the administrative tribunal of Marseilles which has ruled against our de-

Chirac poll reform targets far right

INA move partly designed to weaken the power of the National Front, especially at a local level, President Jacques Chirac suggested on Thursday that deputies be elected to the European Parliament in regional constituencies rather than nationwide.

Like many of the centre-right, Mr Chirac is fearful of a strong showing by the NF in next year's European elections. Under the current proportional representation system, MPs are elected on nationwide lists decided by party headquarters. But Mr Chirac's reasoning is that the strong local and regional infrastructure of the mainstream centre-right will allow its parties successfully to promote local men and women to the detriment of the extreme-right.

A move towards electing Euro-MPs by regional constituencies would allow the centre-right local party activists to promote locally-known faces, thus hopefully eclipsing the extreme-right.

decision to create a birth bonus for French families, and which demonstrates that apparently France can no longer support its [own] people," she said in a statement. "This situation is even more scandalous because at the same time foreigners are benefiting from benefits which are forbidden to the French, including

illegal immigrants who are allocated a ticket home. The municipality of Vitrolles does not accept this decision and will be appealing against it, in pursuit of its fight to defend French families."

The NF controls four town halls in southern France. It advocates sending Arab and African immigrants "home" and wants to amend the constitution in order to give preference to French citizens in jobs, housing and other state benefits.

The birth bonus was introduced last January. At the time, Mrs Mégret's husband Bruno, deputy national leader of the far-right party, described the "national preference measure" as a patriotic act.

"The purpose of this measure is to try to help French families at a time when the government is penalising them and to encourage French births in order to ensure more harmony," he told journalists.

Bruno Mégret is widely viewed as the power behind the scenes of Vitrolles, a puppet-master pulling his wife's strings. He is considered the most likely successor to the party's ageing leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. The party's actions in Vitrolles are seen as a testing ground for their policies.

Since the NF took power in Vitrolles, it has closed down Submarine, a city-funded music café which became a focus for anti-NF activity, and has renamed streets and squares formerly named for François Mitterrand and Nelson Mandela.

Front officials in the other towns it controls have also installed right-wing literature in public libraries.



White child: Bruno Mégret (left), deputy leader of the National Front, in February hands over a 5,000-franc bonus to a couple who have had a baby. The policy has been declared illegal. Photograph: AFP/Georges

Turin braces for Shroud millions

By Anne Hanley
in Turin

THE DOORS of Turin cathedral - temporarily closed for last minute preparations - will reopen tomorrow to allow 4,000 people per hour a two-minute squirt at what many Catholics venerate as Christianity's holiest relic and what many scientists consider a brilliant, inexplicable medieval fake.

The Turin shroud, the piece of linen long believed to have been wrapped around Jesus' body after the crucifixion, goes back on show in the cathedral after 20 years spent folded in its jewel-studded casket.

In a two month "exposition", 2 million people are expected to file past the shroud, which is housed in an explosion proof glass case.

The Turin diocese has sunk 8.5 billion (£2.8m) lira into organisation and shroud-related events. Italian State Railways are offering cut-price shroud packages.

And all for a piece of linen which even the Catholic church has admitted is of questionable origin.

From unquestioned object of veneration, the shroud was relegated in 1988 to the lowly status of mediaeval scam when Carbon-14 tests dated it to between 1260 and 1390. Down but not out, the shroud's champions fought back, and soon succeeded in reinstating it to a noble place in popular mythology: the shroud was hailed not only as Christ's winding sheet, but as a sacred relic under attack.

The Catholic church has wisely remained above the fray. Which is not to say that it is not prepared to reward those who make the trip. Catholic women, for example, who have earned themselves *de jactis* excommunication by having abortions, can wipe the slate clean with a trip to Turin.

Booking is free but obligatory. Phone 0800 967 951. Tomorrow in the 10s: the first of 2 million file past

Sins of delinquent children could be visited on France's parents

THE mysterious video-recorder that suddenly appears in a teenager's room could prove costly for French parents who fail to ask where it came from, writes Adam Lebor.

A government-commissioned report on juvenile crime, by two Socialist MPs, calls for

parents to be prosecuted if their children consistently commit crimes. It follows media reports on rising juvenile crime: in Seine-St-Denis, a poor Paris suburb, 27 per cent of crimes last year were by minors. Christine Lazerges, one of the report's authors, said parents

could be convicted of receiving stolen goods and thus liable to jail if they did nothing about their children possessing goods they could not have afforded.

The MPs also suggest cracking down on parents with unauthorised weapons. There has been a rash of shootings or ac-

cidents by children taking weapons from home to school.

The 135 suggested measures in the report include cutting family allowances to parents seen to be failing to use the money for their children's welfare, or if the children played truant repeatedly and for long

periods. "We must end the situation whereby, through laziness or omission, parents abdicate responsibility and wash their hands of what their children are doing," said the co-author of the report, Jean-Pierre Baldyck. However, many magistrates specialising in minors

said they feared parents of unruly children could be unjustly persecuted if the recommendations were implemented and they warned that such measures would only add to the difficulties of families concerned, many of whom are already in social and economic difficulty.

The report also calls for the creation of 500 posts of youth educators and instructors, a doubling of magistrates of the public prosecutors office who specialise in children and more community policing and more residential centres for child offenders.

THE EDINBURGH RESIDENCE

SETTLE IN AT
THE EDINBURGH
RESIDENCE
(And enter a different world)

ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE YOURSELF...
Discover The Edinburgh Residence for only £165 for two people for 2 nights.
This price includes a full Scottish breakfast each day and a personal tour of The Edinburgh Residence. If you prefer to fly to Edinburgh, we can offer two air tickets for £200 including pick up from the airport.

JUST LIKE THE CITY ITSELF, The Edinburgh Residence is a unique place to stay. Beautiful, timeless and somewhere we want to return, year after year.

In this exquisite mansion, we can unwind in the most luxurious surroundings, and really feel at home. We like to travel, but hotels can start to look the same - so a time ownership suite here was ideal for us.

There are only 29 suites, and each one has an individual atmosphere, with personal touches such as fresh flowers, original art and period style furniture. Ours has the most wonderful bathroom. The staff are superb, too. Always there when you need them, but never in the way. It's actually very hard to leave! But as we can divide our purchase into two

separate breaks there's always another visit to look forward to! To reserve a suite and arrange a personal tour of The Edinburgh Residence, or for more information, please return the coupon below or call 0131 226 3380.

THE EDINBURGH RESIDENCE
SEEING IS BELIEVING

0131 226 3380

I would like more information about The Edinburgh Residence

2 night visit and tour ☐ Rental details ☐

Surname _____ Title _____ First Name _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Day _____ Eve _____

Please return to: The Edinburgh Residence, 7 Rothessay Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 7RY

Whether it's teenagers keeping up with their friends, children discovering the internet, or you working from home, these days one phone line just isn't enough.

That's why BT will now install a second line for half price - just £58.17.

What's more, both of your lines can benefit from the BT discounts that you may already have, like Friends & Family and PremierLine.

The offer runs from April 1st to June 30th. To order, just visit www.2ndLines.bt.com, or fight your way to your existing telephone and call us on

Freefone 0800 22 22 99. **BT** It's good to talk

APPLIES TO BT 2310 (MINS) 2310 (MINS) 4 AND 2310 (MINS) 4. ANALOGUE EXCHANGE LINE. BT RENTAL APPLIES. MINIMUM PERIOD 12 MONTHS. DOES NOT APPLY TO BT 2310 (MINS) 4. BT 2310 (MINS) 4. BT 2310 (MINS) 4.

Japanese bargain with Russia while they can

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Tokyo

A FEW MILES off its north-east coast, on every Japanese-made map of Japan, are three enticing-looking islands called Etorofu, Kunashiri and Shikotan. The map shows them to be steep and mountainous, with small fishing towns clinging to the coastline. They look like the perfect place for an adventure holiday – you imagine bears, and smouldering volcanoes, and icebergs during the winter.

But travel agents in Tokyo giggle uncomfortably when you ask about the islands and, whatever the maps claim, any attempt to cross the narrow straits which separate them from the Japanese mainland can only end one way: interception and arrest by Russian gunboats.

These are the Northern Territories (the Southern Kurile Islands to the rest of the world), a relic of the Cold War, and the principal reason for Boris Yeltsin's visit to Japan this weekend. Since August 1945, when Russia seized the three islands and the uninhabited islets of Habomai, they have been the subject of a dispute which has overshadowed all else in Russia-Japan relations.

Though neighbours, the two countries conduct little trade with each other – Russia counts for less than 1 per cent of Japanese overseas trade. Even after the end of the Cold War, little aid has found its way from Tokyo to Moscow. Most remarkably, the two sides have never signed a peace treaty: technically the Second World War has never ended between Russia and Japan.



During the Cold War, relations were so bad that this detail hardly made a difference, but since the collapse of the Soviet Union it has become anomalous. In the last year, great efforts have been made to sew up a deal. "For 40 years things were absolutely chilly," says a Japanese official. "Now we find to our

north this big country with similar values to our own – democracy and the free market." Last year, at their first summit in Siberia, the two leaders promised to work on a peace treaty and sign it by 2000, the scheduled date for Russia's next presidential election.

Physical control of the Southern Kuriles clearly belongs to Russia, as the Japanese were expelled at the end of the war and replaced by transplanted Soviet citizens. There is still a Russian garrison on the islands. But the status quo is unsatisfactory, so the 18 months between now and the 2000 deadline will be a battle of nerves.

For Mr Yeltsin, there is the lure of Japanese money. After the summit in Siberia, Tokyo announced \$1.5bn (£888m) in loans. What few polls have been conducted suggest that plenty of Russians in the Kuriles would be happy to live in rich Japan rather than under distant Moscow. But no Russian president is going to hand them over without a big incentive.

Japan insists on recognition of its sovereignty as a precondition to a peace treaty – having achieved that, it is clear no one would expect the islands to be returned overnight. Security,

rather than possession, is a consideration. During the Cold War, the Kuriles were important principally for their strategic value as a hiding place for Russian nuclear submarines and potentially as the launch pad for a Soviet invasion. "That fear has receded," says a Japanese government source, "but I don't know if it's disappeared".

The Japanese are burdened with continuing uncertainty about the Russian presidency. However keen on a treaty with Japan, Mr Yeltsin has bigger things to worry about at home, and Tokyo is downplaying expectations of any big developments this weekend. Having postponed his visit for a week, Japanese diplomats take comfort in the fact that Mr Yeltsin has chosen to come at all. They know poor health or political weakness could carry him off before their year 2000 deadline. In the village of Kawana where the Prime Minister and President will fish this weekend, a helicopter will be on standby to chopper Mr Yeltsin off – onto a plane to Moscow or, in extremis, to hospital. "The important thing is to make the most of this upsurge," says a Japanese government source. It might be years before the chance arises again.



Minority interest: Demonstrators in Tokyo protesting in support of the Ainu, an aboriginal minority from the northern part of the Japanese archipelago. They claim the disputed Southern Kuriles should be handed to the Ainu. Photograph: Reuters

Yeltsin keeps cards close to his chest on Kurile Islands deal

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

BORIS YELTSIN was last night preparing to fly from Moscow leaving behind a bewildered country without a prime minister, a permanent government, or any clear indication of who is in charge of the Kremlin while he is away.

Closely monitored by his doctors, the President faced a

weekend of talks with Japan's prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, that could scarcely have been more unfortunately timed. Yesterday, for the second time, the lower house of parliament refused to confirm Sergei Kiriyenko, the 35-year-old provincial neophyte whom Mr Yeltsin – to universal astonishment – nominated as his prime minister last month. The final vote is next week: if he is

again rejected, the law states the parliament must be dissolved.

As Mr Yeltsin prepared to leave his residence outside Moscow, accompanied by his younger daughter Tatyana (chief suspect as one of the authors of the current crisis), he was immersed in a crisis as transparent as the filthy spring slush that has engulfed the capital.

His game of brinkmanship with parliament, which the Pres-

ident is trying to pass off as "politics as normal", is complex enough. But it was also unclear who is running the show while he is away. He will remain in charge of the trigger-controlling Russia's arsenal of nuclear weapons during his stay in the resort of Kawana, 75 miles south-west of Tokyo. But no laws exist specifying who stands in if – as is possible, given his poor health record – he is in-

capacitated. Under the constitution, that job falls to the prime minister. But Russia has not got one. Earlier this week, Mr Kiriyenko announced he would take command, but his remarks were brushed aside by the Kremlin, which said the President himself would remain at the helm.

Even if Mr Yeltsin's trip were taking place in less troubled times, it would still be viewed

with foreboding in Russia, especially among "the family" – his handlers, wife and daughters – and the cluster of moguls who support the Kremlin.

They know all too well that the 67-year-old President does not travel well these days. His trip to Sweden late last year, when he seemed confused as to where he was, produced a stack of embarrassing headlines questioning his mental condition.

Last month, he tried to give an end-of-talks press conference before discussions had even begun with Jacques Chirac and Helmut Kohl in Moscow.

Russia will be hoping that this time there will be no hitches as Mr Yeltsin sits down with Mr Hashimoto. The agenda includes discussing a peace treaty ending the hostilities of the Second World War – a document placed on ice by a dispute over

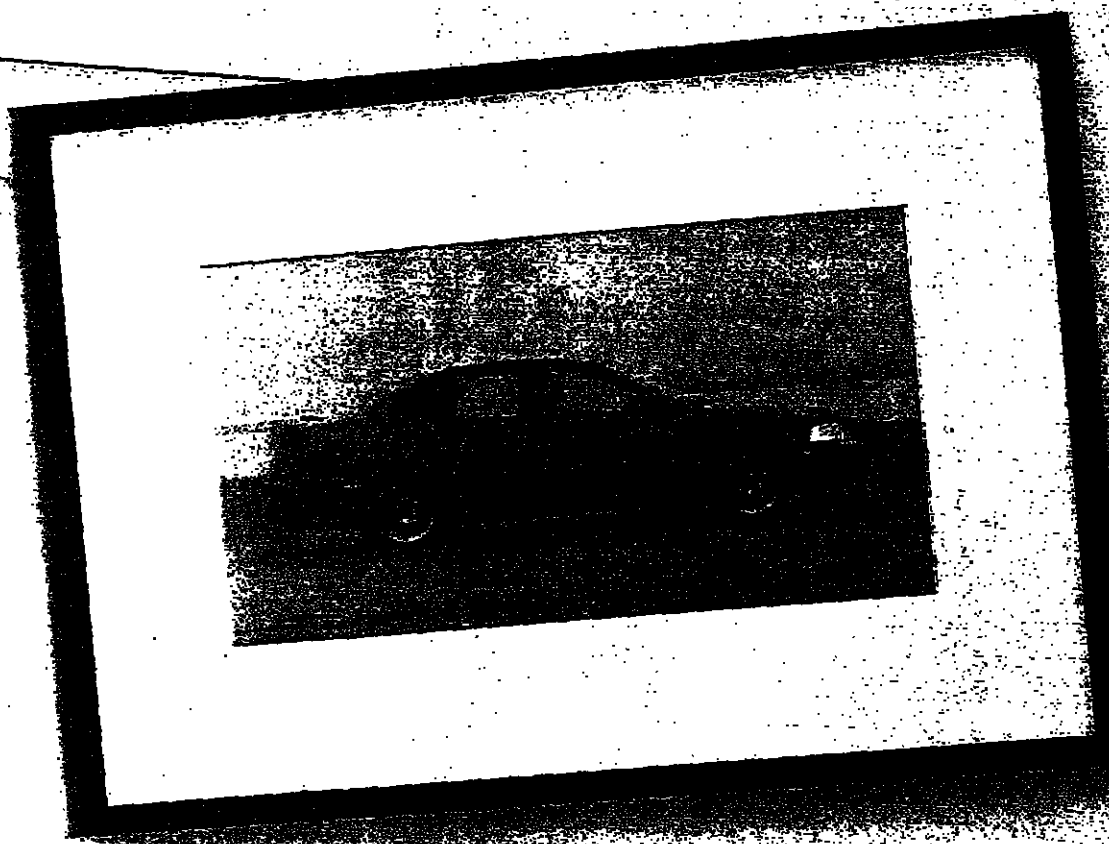
the Kurile Islands. The summit has already been postponed once because of Mr Yeltsin's domestic political problems.

It will be an informal meeting in the beachside hotel where Marilyn Monroe honeymooned with Joe DiMaggio.

But no amount of glamour is likely to lessen the anxiety of the President's aides to get their man back home as fast as possible.

VOLVO

S40T4



THE
VOLVO
S40
T4.
200BHP,
£20,555.

The Volvo S40 T4 is one performance car that won't stretch you. For £20,555 it delivers a turbo-charged engine that can take you from 30-70 in 5.9 seconds! dynamic suspension for taut handling; DSA (Dynamic Stability Assurance) to control wheelspin; plus all the safety equipment and luxury spec you'd expect.

The Volvo S40. From £14,955 to £24,105. Or from £338 per month via Volvo Contract Hire.*

For further details or to arrange a test drive, call

0800 11 40 40

VOLVO. A CAR YOU CAN BELIEVE IN.

مكتبة الأمل

Standoff as Duma rejects Kiriyeenko

BORIS YELTSIN last night stood firmly by his chosen, but twice rejected, prime minister and set the stage for the most politically precarious stand-off with parliament since he sent in the tanks in 1993, writes Phil Reeves in Moscow.

His tug-of-war with an indignant legislature entered its final nail-biting stage as he nominated Sergei Kiriyenko as premier for a third time - ignoring complaints that the 35-year-old is too inexperienced to chair the government of a vast nuclear power. The President's move came after the 450-member lower house, the State Duma, refused for a second time to confirm Mr Kiriyenko in the job.

The former provincial banker won only 115 votes from the Communist- and nationalist-dominated chamber - 111 less than he needed to be confirmed, and 28 fewer than when his candidacy was first rejected a week ago. Mr Yeltsin has insisted throughout that Mr Kiriyenko, a technocrat who favours market economics, is his only candidate for the job, which became vacant when he sacked Viktor Chernomyrdin and his administration on 23 March. By the constitution, a third rejection would automatically lead to the Duma's dissolution and new elections.

The final vote will be next week. The key question is whether both adversaries are willing to see the Duma disbanded, or if one side's nerves will crack. Both stand to lose if the chamber is shut down. The Kremlin knows that the next parliament is likely to be even more hostile. Whatever happens, though, Mr Yeltsin gets his man. If the Duma is dissolved, Mr Kiriyenko will be automatically confirmed as premier, and a cabinet appointed. For parliament, the downside is the uncertainty of keeping their seats, the loss of treasured perks, and a fear that Mr Yeltsin may find a way of delaying new elections.

Yesterday, the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov declared that Russia was now "hostage to a dead constitution and an absolutely incapable president". Mr Yeltsin put a brave face on the crisis. As he prepared to fly to Japan, he took the result "calmly", his spokesman said. Since this damaging business is of his own making, there is not much else he could do.



For sale: Shops and stall in central Baghdad display their wares in a desperate bid to tempt buyers
Photograph: Rex Features

Iraqi economy has gone to the dogs

By Patrick Cockburn
in Baghdad

FRIDAY is the day of the dog market in Baghdad. It takes place in the Souq al-Gazil, a stretch of empty ground beside the main road on the edge of the main market, which echoes with the sound of several hundred barking dogs from early in the morning.

They come in all sizes from dapper terriers to grim German Shepherds. Their owners mostly are selling them as guard dogs. These are popular among Iraqis because of the increase in robberies and theft as the country gets poorer as a result of sanctions.

"Nimr is a clever dog," said a man, indicating the pugnacious hound beside him. "He will tear a piece out of any enemy who gets near your home. But if he is a friend of his owner he will never attack him."

The expression on Nimr's face did not give one complete confidence in his friend-or-foe identification system, but he looked as if he was worth the 25,000 Iraqi dinars (£15) being asked for him.

Iraqis do not usually keep dogs as indoor pets, but in one corner of the Souq al-Gazil a group of better dressed owners were disposing of poodles and dachshunds who were clearly not cut out to guard anybody.

The most popular pets for sale are pigeons, doves, parrots and budgies. But in the middle of the souq is an entire street filled with people buying and selling goldfish

along with fish tanks and ornaments.

"When Iraqis want to enjoy themselves on a Friday they go to the markets," said an Iraqi friend. From early in the morning they pour into Shurjah, the central market area on the east bank of the Tigris.

Since sanctions were imposed eight years ago the markets have grown as Iraqis try to survive by selling and buying small quantities of goods. Nothing exposes the real poverty of the country better. People sit for hours in the sun trying to sell a broken electric fire or some cracked plates.

There is also the continuing need for spare parts. The streets are full of cars, but none have been imported since 1990. They are cheap to run because 60 litres of gasoline - the only item not in short supply or very expensive - costs just £2. In one morning two cars I was travelling in broke down. The first had a broken fuel pump. The second started emitting clouds of smoke or steam from the engine. In each case the only remedy for the driver was to go immediately to Shurjah market and try to find the spare part.

There are people with money in Baghdad. In the bird market a merchant showed us two hawks for hunting, each tethered to the stump of a tree. He said: "The first comes from Kurdistan and I will sell him for 750,000 dinars (£450) the other is from Iran and will cost you one-and-a-quarter million dinars (£750)." He seemed confident he would find somebody to buy them.

The saddest place in the whole

of Shurjah market is probably the streets where Iraqi intellectuals come to sell their books. Many are laid out on the pavement off al-Rashid street. Some were obviously once part of somebody's university course, like Henry IV Part One or a battered Penguin classic edition of Sophocles.

Baghdad does not show the same signs of poverty as Beirut did in the civil war, when there were obvious symptoms of the collapse of government. Rubbish either rotted where it was left or was consumed in bonfires which burned all over the city. But Baghdad still works. Cars obey traffic lights, though there are frequent electricity black-outs. There are also signs of better times ahead with more foreigners turning up, looking for business. There are pilgrims, mostly Lebanese and Iranian, going to the great shrines at Karbala and Najaf. There are hopes, perhaps misplaced, that the crisis and near war in February brought the end of sanctions nearer.

But this does not do much good to the mass of Iraqis. The collapse of the immunisation programme means diseases like polio, rubella, measles and meningitis have become common. Most telling of all are the beggars on the streets. Last week, as we drove into Baghdad, three girls, all beggars and all under eight, launched themselves at our still moving car and clung onto the doorhandles and wing mirror, allowing themselves to be dragged along the road until we could stop and pay them off.

Tensions rise over arms inspections

BARELY two months after Kofi Annan negotiated an end to the winter stand-off between the United Nations and Iraq, concern was mounting yesterday that tensions over UN weapons inspections in that country may soon be reignited, writes David Osborne in New York.

Pessimism in New York centred on a new report to the UN Security Council from the chief weapons inspector, Richard Butler. In it, he says that his teams have made "virtual-

ly no progress" since his last report six months ago.

In his report, which will be considered by the council on 27 April, Mr Butler points to the disruptions caused by the stand-off which centred on access for inspectors to Saddam Hussein's multiple palaces.

"If this is what Iraq intended by the crisis, then, in large measure, it could be said to have been successful," Mr Butler wrote. "A major consequence of the four-month crisis

authorised by Iraq has been that, in contrast with the prior reporting period, virtually no progress in verifying disarmament has been able to be reported."

Only when Mr Butler certifies that he is satisfied that all of Iraq's programmes to produce nuclear, biological and chemical weapons have been dismantled can the Security Council consider lifting the sanctions imposed on the country after the Gulf War.

THE SIMPSONS

88 MINUTES
INCLUDES
SUBTITLES

FEATURING

Dysfunctional Family Video.

Sex, Lies and The Simpsons. Free Simpsons print with every video bought.

TRACK IT DOWN AT
our price

STAPLES
The Office Superstore

COPIER PRICES

DOWN

XEROX PHOTOCOPIER

MODEL 5201
SKU 256925

NEW
LOWER
PRICE
WAS £269

3
YEAR
WARRANTY

STAPLES PRICE
£199.99
INC. VAT

EQUIVALENT TO
£2
PER REAM

STAPLES PRICE
£9.99
INC. VAT

5 REAMS OF COPIER PAPER

SKU 257394
• A4, 80gsm
• 500 sheets per ream

FREE
SHREDDER
WORTH
£34.98

XEROX PHOTOCOPIER

MODEL XC520 SKU 232439
• 3 Year Warranty
• 40 sheet paper tray

STAPLES PRICE
£379.99
INC. VAT

NEW
LOWER
PRICE
WAS £399.99

41 SUPERSTORES NATIONWIDE

HUDDERSFIELD OPENING SOON

FOR YOUR
NEAREST STORE
FREEPHONE
0800 141414

Copy Centre
• Black & White Copies
• Colour Copies
• Binding & Laminating
• Custom Printing
• Custom Stamps

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
MONDAY TO FRIDAY
8AM - 8PM
SATURDAY 9AM - 6PM
SUNDAY (open 6 hours, times may vary)

150%
ULTIMATE PRICE PROTECTION
Show us a lower price and we'll refund the difference. We'll match it 100% PLUS give you 50% of the difference (up to £25) as a refund now or within 30 days of our purchase. Call or ask in store for full terms & conditions.

In the unlikely event that a refund is required then any free offer must be returned complete. Call for details. All items subject to availability.

Mandela loses court battle with 'Mr Rugby'

By Mary Braid
in Johannesburg

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela lost his court battle with South African rugby yesterday after a judge ruled that the government must abandon its plans to investigate alleged racism, nepotism and financial irregularities in the sport.

Justice William de Villiers took 30 seconds to deliver his judgment after a controversial case during which he forced President Nelson Mandela to become the first South African president to defend a political decision in court.

He said he would give his reasons later but ordered the government to pay its opponent's costs.

In court, the South African Rugby Football Union (SARU) had argued that the government had no right to interfere in its affairs, while President Mandela testified that the sport was too important to nation-building to be ignored.

Last month's humiliating two-day cross-examination of the President prompted the black-controlled National Sports Council (NSC) to demand the resignation of the Sar-



Luyt: Won court skirmish but may lose wider war

fu executive. Most of all it wants the head of the SARU president, "Big" Louis Luyt, a hate figure for those demanding a radical overhaul of the sport, still considered a bastion of Afrikaner nationalism.

The ruling came as the racist image of South African rugby was reinforced in New Zealand. Toks van der Linde, a Springbok on tour with the Western Stormers side, was sent home after he reportedly called a black woman a "kaffir".

Last year the national rugby coach, Andre Markgraaff, was sacked after he was secretly taped referring to black rugby

officials as "fucking kaffirs". Though Mr Luyt gave the thumbs-up when the ruling was announced in a Pretoria court yesterday, he was uncharacteristically modest in victory and understandably so.

Relations have never been worse between rugby and the government, which complains nothing is being done to bring blacks into the sport. Sponsors and the NSC were quick to repeat warnings that a court victory did not mean Mr Luyt could win the wider war.

Mr Mandela's office said the government would appeal and the NSC said its demands for SARU resignations by 7 May, "still stood". The council has said the South African rugby team will face an international boycott and withdrawal of its Springbok emblem if it does not comply. Sponsors, worried that a boycott will cripple the game, have demanded that, at the very least, an inquiry should still go ahead.

If Mr Luyt has nothing to hide, they argue, he should open his doors. There is speculation that the court victory might allow Big Louis, whose reputation for arrogance led Mr Mandela to describe him as a

"pitiless dictator", to step down. Russell MacMillan, chief executive of M-Net Supersport, which holds broadcasting rights in South Africa for the lucrative Super 12 and tri-nations series, repeated warnings that only Mr Luyt's resignation could save the game. The President's office yesterday spoke of the Mr Mandela's respect for the law.

But an NSC executive member, Bill Jardine, said: "Racists are still in control of our judicial system and other sectors in our country". Fink Haysom, the President's lawyer, criticised the "extraordinary" decision of Judge de Villiers, who opposed admission of black lawyers to the Pretoria Bar until the mid 1980s, to subpoena Mr Mandela. "We hope he will be as assiduous in furnishing reasons [for the judgment] as he was in giving his ruling."

BENONI: A white farmer accused of shooting dead a black infant withdrew his request for bail as protesters chanted and sang for justice outside the court. AP reports.

Nicholas Steyn faces charges of murder and attempted murder. His lawyer and the prosecutor discussed possible threats to his safety if he were bailed.



Members of the African National Congress Women's League outside a court in Benoni, near Johannesburg, where a white farmer, accused of shooting dead a six-month-old black child, withdrew his request for bail. Photograph: Reuters

Low, low prices on the things you need NOW

**KEY
Season
PRICE**

"You can only get this size of Dulux emulsion at B&Q."

Dulux Vinyl Matt or Silk Emulsion Pure Brilliant White. 7.5 litres. **£11.49** each



Colonial 6 Panel Knotty Pine Interior Door 78ins x 30ins. Was £23.49 **£19.99**



Powerbreaker RCD Adaptor JO2 Was £13.25 **£12.99**



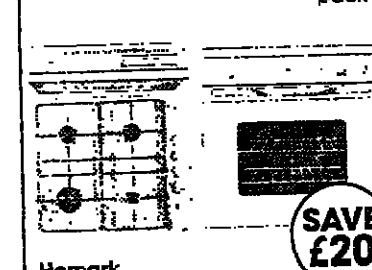
Hydrolite Hi-Heat Wall Mounted Towel Radiator White, 450 x 974mm, 512 watts. With 5 year guarantee (subject to terms and conditions) **£84.99**



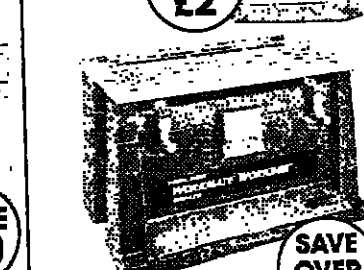
Pine Dado Rail 20mm x 45mm x 2.4m. Pack of 4. **£9.99** per pack



Castrol GTX Motor Oil 15w/50, 5 litres. Was £10.99 **£8.99**



Hamark Fan Pack Includes fan oven and standard hood. Available in brown or white, with gas or electric hob. Was £250 **£239** each



Black & Decker Workmate Workbox WM450 Provides storage for tools. Supports up to 113kg. Was £37.75 **£27.49**

20% OFF ALL DULUX COLOUR PAINT MIXING!

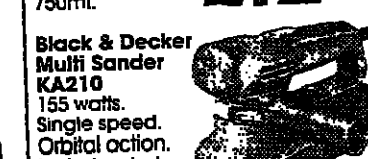
Vinyl Matt, Silk or Soft Sheen Emulsions, Gloss or Satinwood in various sizes.



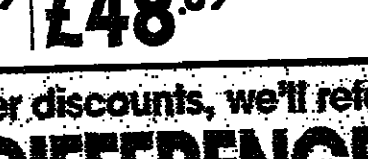
Vinyl Soft Sheen Emulsion 5 litres. Was £20.99 **£16.79**



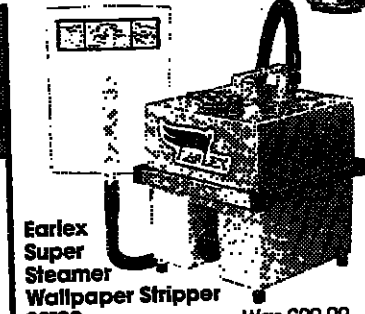
Gloss 500ml. Was £4.99 **£3.99**



Ransel Paint & Grain Transforms most surfaces into an attractive grain effect. Includes base coat, graining coat and tools. Available in various colours. 750ml. **£12.99**



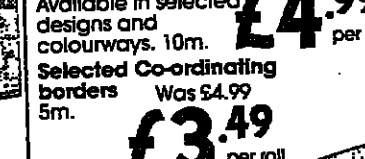
Black & Decker Multi Sander KA210 155 watts. Single speed. Orbital action. Includes dust cassette and adjustable handle. **£48.89**



Earlex Super Steamer Wallpaper Stripper SS100 Large lightweight steamplate, water level indicator and 5.8m working length. Was £29.99 **£24.99**



Vymura Emporium Ready Pasted Vinyl Wallcoverings Available in selected designs and colourways. 10m. Was £6.99 **£4.99** per roll



Vymura Colour Co-ordinates Range of Wallcoverings Was £5.99 Available in various colours and designs. 10m roll. **£4.99** per roll



Co-ordinating Borders 5m roll. Was £3.99 **£2.99** per roll

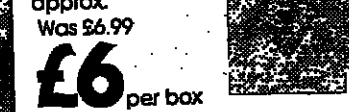
FREE Crown Solo Gloss 750ml. Pure Brilliant White. Normal B&Q price £5.49 when you buy 1 x 5 litres or 2 x 2.5 litres Crown Solo One Coat Mid Sheen Coloured Emulsion.



Crown Solo One Coat Mid Sheen Coloured Emulsion Various colours. 2.5 litres (shown). **£14.99** each



5 litres. **£25.99** each



Florence Viviani Ceramic Wall Tiles Box of 27. Available in Grey, Peach, Plain, border or inset. 20cm x 15cm approx. Was £6.99 **£6** per box

Khmer Rouge fights on as Pol Pot burns

By Sam Jary

POL POT, the Cambodian dictator responsible for the deaths of nearly 2 million of his own people, is to be cremated today at a private ceremony, without Khmer Rouge leaders in attendance. But the movement he led until last year still refuses to die.

A force of between 300 and 2,000 Khmer Rouge guerrillas, hard-line remnants of Pol Pot's once powerful army, is holding out against government troops on the Cambodian border.

Heavily outnumbered but refusing to surrender, they are led by a one-legged veteran who ousted Pol Pot as leader of the Khmer Rouge in 1997. His *nom de guerre* is Ta Mok, "grandfather", but for more than 20 years he has been better known to his enemies as "the Butcher".

Born in 1926, his real name is believed to be Chhit Chhouen. After finishing his education in Phnom Penh, he joined the resistance to French colonial rule in the late-Forties.

It was during this period that he met a young resistance fighter called Saloth Sar, who was later to rename himself Pol Pot. Ta Mok became an early adherent of Pol Pot's particular brand of Marxist-Leninist Communism, which was influenced by the ancient Khmer civilisation that had dominated South-East Asia

for nearly eight centuries.

By 1975, he was in charge of the south-west zone of the country, and he played an active part in the Khmer Rouge's capture of the capital, Phnom Penh. Their victory over the United States-backed Lon Nol government marked the start of one of the bloodiest purges in history, with Ta Mok second only to "Brother Number One" in his brutality.

With a ruthless zeal for executing middle-class "traitors", he was number three in the party by 1978 after surviving countless purges of the ruling executive by Pol Pot. But the Butcher was the next committee member to be purged and was only saved from execution by the invasion of the Vietnamese in December 1978.

Despite losing a leg to a landmine in the early-Nineties, Ta Mok was put under house arrest in October 1996 for not preventing the mass defection of Khmer Rouge soldiers to the government. He managed to escape, and captured Pol Pot in a lightning counter-attack.

As the man believed to be behind the abduction two years ago of Christopher Howes, the missing British landmine expert, and responsible for countless thousands of deaths, Ta Mok is now number one on the list of Khmer Rouge leaders still to be brought to trial.

Rebels strike near summit

REBELS threw a bomb at a car-sales office in Santiago but it did not explode, police said, as leaders from 34 nations gathered for the Summit of the Americas. The rebels drove up to a Chrysler showroom, burnt a US flag, threw the bomb, fired shots and drove off. No one was hurt. The attack took place a mile from the summit venue. —Reuters, Santiago

New broom for Mongolia

A FORMER journalist who helped topple Mongolia's Communist rulers was set to take over as prime minister after the Cabinet offered to resign. Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj was among a group of intellectuals who rose against 70 years of Soviet-backed rule and demanded democracy. —Reuters, Ulan Bator

Kabila likened to Mobutu

THE UNITED NATIONS investigator for former Zaire compared President Laurent Kabila to the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and attacked his government for obstructing an inquiry into massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees. "Mobutu's rule in the 1980s and his state structure is very much like that of Kabila," Roberto Garzon said. —Reuters, Geneva

Blood money

THOUSANDS of Romanians crowded hospitals to donate blood to get money to spend on Orthodox Easter, one of the biggest holidays. Romanians get 84,000 lei (about £6) for giving blood, and a bonus of 205,000 lei after five donations. —AP, Bucharest

Ghetto survivor honoured

Poland's president Aleksander Kwasniewski awarded the highest state distinction, the White Eagle Order, to Marek Edelman, 75, the only surviving leader of the ill-fated uprising in the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943. —AP, Warsaw

KEY Season PRICE Even if our competitors offer discounts, we'll refund **DOUBLE THE DIFFERENCE!**

You can do it when you B&Q it!

EARN TESCO CLUBCARD POINTS AT B&Q
Ask in store for details
Does not apply in B&Q Warehouse or B&Q Depots.



OPENING HOURS
Monday-Saturday: Most stores 8am-6pm. Sunday: Most stores England & Wales 10am-6pm (where permitted), Scotland 9am-6pm & Northern Ireland 1pm-6pm. Certain store hours may vary, please phone your nearest store to confirm.
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST D.I.Y. CHAIN - FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE PHONE 0181 466 4166

Internet: <http://www.bq.co.uk>



Rugby

Saving the view from the bridge

Historic Ludlow survived the Civil War, but it faces its most serious threat from developers, says Julian Critchley

LUDLOW, one of the most beautiful small towns in England, is under threat from the planners. The castle, from which Wales was governed 400 hundred years ago, is under siege, not from Cromwellians who captured the town during the Civil War, but from the developers, planners and the South Shropshire District Council.

Turner painted the castle, Dinham bridge and the river Teme; it is precisely that view that is vulnerable to desecration in the names of profit and "progress".

An ugly covered swimming pool is to be torn down. In its place it is proposed to permit a firm of Telford developers to put up six dwellings in Midland red brick, in painful contrast to the Silurian yellow limestone of the castle.

At least that was the idea, and it was originally passed by the relevant committee by 14 votes to one. But, thanks to angry Ludlovians, and a petition of 300 signatures, the district council promptly met again and voted to reverse their original decision by one to 14. But there is a catch. Ludlovians have been given until the end of April to match the £150,000 which the district council considers to be the value of the site. So far Guild '98, a body of local people, have raised £23,000 in pledges, including one of £5,000 from the Plymouth Estates.

All 13 "Ludlows" in North America have been written to by the Guild asking for pledges and have received a video of Ludlow itself. The English Partnerships Community Investment Fund has been approached (so far without result), the National Lottery Charities Board, the Civic Trust Local Projects Fund and several other similar bodies. Lord Powis, who owns the castle has been written to asking him for his support. We wait in hope.

Guild '98 has organised a town meeting for the end of April to be followed by a brief which will be sent to every dis-

trict councillor (Ludlow has seven out of 42 councillors). Our dilemma is quite simply put. The price put on the site by the district council seems infinitely elastic, while the time allowed to protesters, remarkably short. We can either raise the money, which seems unlikely, or, so muddy the waters that developers will fight shy of raising a hornet's nest of protest.

The site itself was originally bought by public subscription: ownership passed to the old town council, and then in the plethora of local government reorganisation that has characterised recent years, was acquired by South Shropshire District Council. Guild '98 would prefer the site to become

an open space-memorial garden and to refurbish the old mill to generate electricity from the River Teme, which we have been told is a practicable proposition. If this development were not enough, Ludlow is faced with a rash of other developments, many, if not all of which, would deface the town: the barbarians are at the gates.

The southern approach road runs through unspoilt country with a marvellous view of the Cleve Hill directly into the town and its 14th century bridge. There are plans afoot to build on the eastern side of the road, thus adding a third suburb to the town. One of Ludlow's many attractions is that on two sides at least, town gives way suddenly to country.



Historic view: Turner's impression of Ludlow Castle with Dinham bridge across the Teme river, and the same view today (below)

Bridgemen Arts Library

Ludlow is faced with a rash of developments. The barbarians are at the gate

Tesco has been granted permission to build a supermarket on what was a council-owned site at the bottom of Corve Street. When he was Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer twice rejected the planned building as "unsuitable". John Prescott is now being asked to consider a third plan. Whatever its merits or demerits, a supermarket on such a site would attract many people living in south Shropshire, who would park their cars outside and do their shopping. If

this went ahead, few, if anyone, would climb the long and very steep hill that is Corve Street to shop in the town proper, thus endangering the bulk of the town's shops which lie within the conservation area at the top of the town.

Besides having much beautiful Georgian and Tudor architecture, we can boast six butchers' shops, an excellent deli, and several fruiterers. All would suffer were Tesco to take away their trade. There is already an ominous rash of charity shops. A final threat is housing development on Gallops Bank, one of the two remaining green spaces to the east of the old town.

What could happen in handsome Ludlow, is typical of what is, and has been, happening elsewhere. All one has to do is to travel 10 miles south of the Hereford Road as far as Leominster to see what "development" has done to a small country town. The heart has been taken out

of it by careless road traffic schemes and an out-of-town supermarket. With such an example at its doorstep, it is little wonder that the townsfolk of Ludlow, who include many newcomers taking advantage of comparatively low house prices, are up in arms. A final irony is in the picture of Ludlow, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, that is to be found on the A49. The message is "Come to Ludlow", the picture believe it or not, is Turner's of the castle and Dinham bridge - but without the six dwellings the local authority seems so keen on inflicting on the finest view of the town.

God save us from the planners.

Party on: a globetrotter's guide to the millennium

You might think all the best bashes are booked up. You'd be wrong. By Nicole Veash

ON MILLENNIUM EVE the world is expected to erupt into the mother of all parties, with nearly 2 billion people celebrating as midnight chimes on 31 December, 1999. Most of us have taken it for granted that villages, towns and cities across Europe, the Americas, Australasia and the Pacific will try to outdo each other with fabulous displays of fireworks, laser and light shows, live entertainment, festivals, parades, big-name bands and grand ceremonial gestures. In Britain, the Cabinet is expected to approve a four-day bank holiday to mark the new age, giving us the opportunity to have an all-day, all-night extravaganza as the culmination of the celebrations.

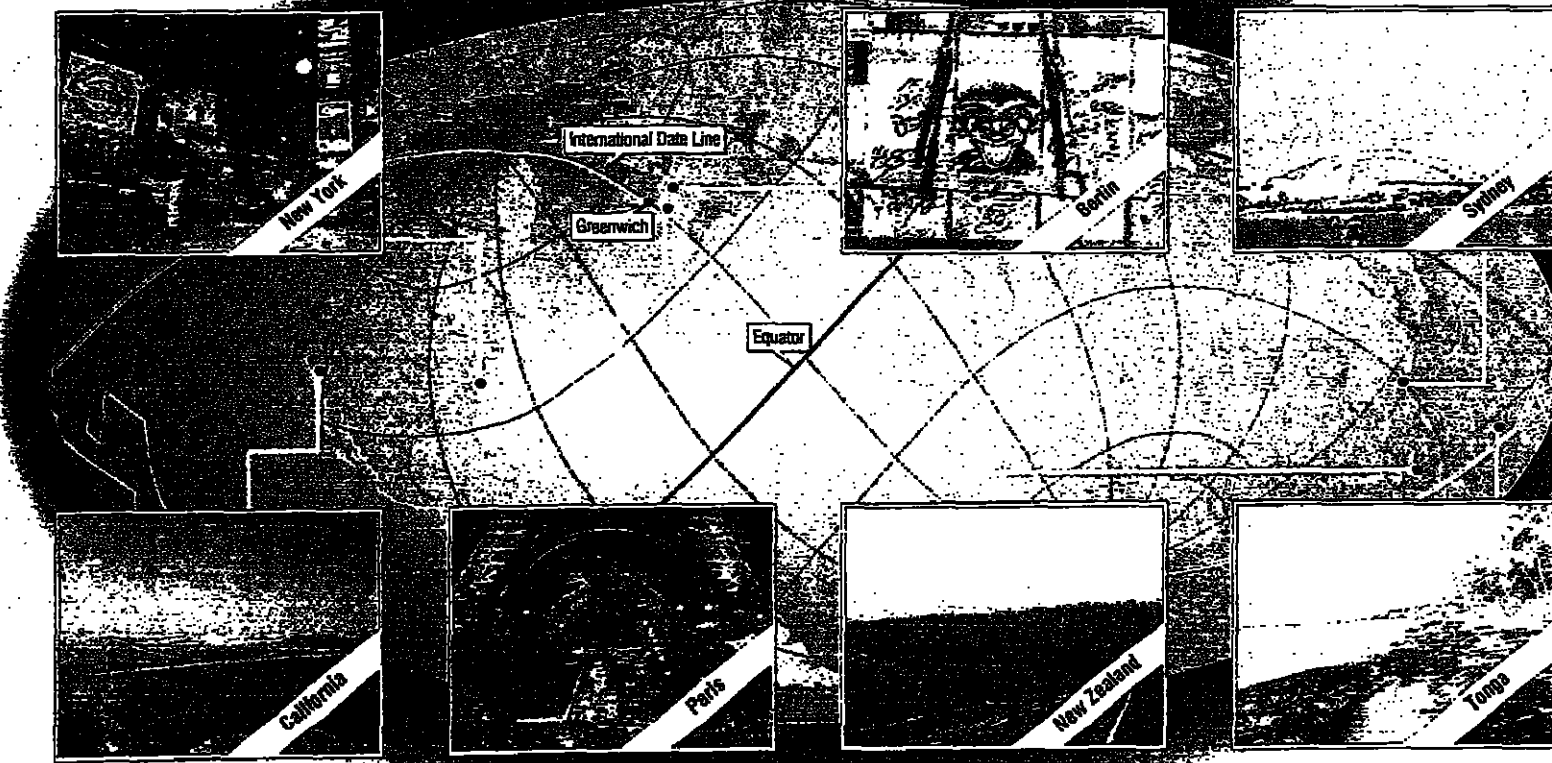
Not so fast. Rumours of fully booked hotels, restaurants and planes have been much exaggerated. So far, it seems as if most people are going to do what they normally do - sup the cocoa during a night-in with Clive James on TV - unless they make a sudden effort to arrange a big bash.

But with the planned four-day break, which Culture Secretary Chris Smith has proposed (suggesting Friday 31 December and Monday 3 January as bank holidays), the temptation for Britons is to look further afield than the Greenwich Millennium Dome and head to the four corners of the globe for the party of the century.

Take, for example, Gisborne, on New Zealand's north-east coast. There you could glimpse the first sunrise of the new millennium and join around 100,000 party-goers expected to swarm to the town and surrounding areas. Over the water, Ric Birch, producer of the opening

The Big Night

Where people will be welcoming in the year 2000



Based on "Ultimate Millennium projection"

Graphic: Phil Welch

ceremony of Australia's 2000 Olympic Games, has been asked to stage an outdoor party in Sydney harbour and be still has a lot of space to fill.

Because the International Date Line passes through the South Pacific, there will be major events on many paradise islands. Tonga's New Millennium Festival will run

throughout December, while a pan-Fijian party will climax in a dawn-to-dusk concert on the island of Viti Line.

A three-day bash in southern California is expected to attract thousands. The outdoor Party 2000, aimed at America's post-Woodstock generation, has a £662m budget and is expected to attract 2.5 mil-

lion people. Only 100,000 tickets have so far been sold. Slicker, media-led spectacles will take place across America, including a gathering in Times Square, synonymous with New Year's Eve in American minds, where satellite television will link up with festivals around the world. Stephen J. Morello, president of the New

York Convention and Visitors' Bureau, says: "We have hardly even begun to take reservations and it is annoying that various promoters are claiming the city's hotels have been sold out when they haven't."

Tens of thousands of people are expected to congregate around the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. The city's

celebrations are to stretch over 20 months, incorporating the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Paris plans a series of bizarre (and fairly tasteless) displays, including turning the Eiffel Tower into a high-tech chicken for a night. An enormous egg will descend out of the belly of the tower, to the sound of 2,000 drums from five continents. When the egg cracks open, hundreds of television screens relaying images of millennium parties from around the globe will be revealed. There is also a plan to fill the River Seine with coloured plastic fish. The city's celebrated George V Hotel has only 50 rooms booked for the big night, with another 200 still available for partygoers.

Closer to home, London and Edinburgh will compete for the best celebration. The extra bank holiday gives those from outside London time to travel to the Millennium Dome for the New Year's Eve party. While in the Scottish capital, Hogmanay has been elevated to a four-day festival for more than 350,000 people.

Although celebrations will thrill part of the world, others remain unmoved. For Jews, the Christian message has no resonance, and, rather than mark 2,000 years since Christ's birth, they are now in their 57th century. In Egypt, the millennium coincides with the Islamic year 1420 and even the country's Coptic Christians believe it is only 1716. Thailand, a Buddhist country, began its own second millennium 42 years ago, while in China, communist party officials talk earnestly about the 21st century, not parties.

But if you just want to stay in and toast the new millennium with a bottle of bubbly, you'll be reassured to know that there's still plenty of time to get the drinks. The Champagne Information Bureau says there are currently one billion bottles of the golden elixir lying in storage, although it concedes that some vintages might be hard to find.

Research by Adrian Morrison

Warning from the profit of doom

Warren Clarke is happy to upset Bristolians in a series exposing their role in the slave trade, writes Anthea Gerrie

WITH his pugnant scowl and jutting jaw, Warren Clarke looks like a man permanently ready for a punch-up. But it is only now, nearly 30 years after he first laid on the agro as one of Malcolm MacDowell's henchmen in *A Clockwork Orange*, that he has actually got into a fight.

It comes from an unexpected quarter. The actor's opponents are the burghers of Bristol, enraged at his determination to expose the city's secret past - that its prosperity was built on the slave trade. "Of course there were slaves," he says. "Of course they were heavily involved. This was Britain's Holocaust, yet it isn't even taught in our schools."

He is as passionate about the is-

sue when we meet in a Soho lunch club as he was last December in Bristol, when the BBC drama *A Respectable Trade*, in which Clarke plays the boorish, upwardly mobile slave trader, Josiah Cole, was premiered in a city still in denial that its prosperity was built on the profits of human cargo.

It is this refusal to accept the validity of definitive documentation that angers him.

"The series doesn't tell any lies; it's set in Bristol because that was a major port of entry for this 'respectable' trade the whole nation was involved in. Other cities were involved - Liverpool heavily - but Liverpool has acknowledged its involvement in a very open way."

The *Bristol Evening Post* is owned by the Merchant Venturers, who as former slave trade monopolists come over as chief villains of the BBC programme, and they took up cudgels when Clarke asserted that the city's history deserved full exposure, saying: "Cities like Bristol became stinking rich because of the slave trade". His name was blazed across the front page.

The four-part series is adapted from her own novel by Philippa Gregory, who was born in Africa, but raised in Bristol. She discovered an unknown story.

"I have a history PhD and I did-



n't know about this - like most conventionally educated people I thought slavery was something that happened in Africa... I discovered there were 20,000 runaway slaves in London alone, which implies that there were a lot more that hadn't run away."

Clarke was won over to *A Re-*

spectable *Trade* by the fact that "it is a beautiful love story, but at the same time it's a powerful tale that hasn't been told before. It covers dodgy ground. This country made fortunes out of slavery. The only thing that was cheap was black people's lives. If a slave was ill on board a ship, they just threw him over-

board. That's how they thought. It's very shocking."

It is not difficult to paint Clarke as a bully-boy.

At 50, he still looks every inch the Droog, as menacing in his expensive soft black kid jacket as he was circa 1971 in his red lipstick and bowler hat. He treats every interview

Reaping riches: Warren Clarke plays Bristol slave trader Josiah Cole in the new BBC series *A Respectable Trade*, one of three shows Clarke is currently starring in.

as a sparring match, glowering over his white wine and puffing defensively on his cigarette. But Clarke has mellowed somewhat since he told his Manchester headmaster to "sod off" when advised to drop the idea of acting in favour of a more suitable profession for a secondary modern boy like plumbing.

Today he still looks tough but speaks softly, with self-deprecating humour. He is humble about his success to the point of insecurity.

"Am I becoming boring?" he asks anxiously when reflecting that not for the first time he is hitting British television screens in triplicate. *A Respectable Trade* comes in the wake of his return in *Dad's Army* and *Pascoe*, and will be followed soon by a satire on BBC management, *In the Red*. Unlike other charismatic middle-aged British television stalwarts bypassed by the movies, Clarke's big-

"Black people lives were cheap. If a slave was ill on board a ship they just threw him overboard. It's very shaming."

screen potential has been identified and explored by four of cinema's most famous names - Stanley Kubrick, Lindsay Anderson, Elaine May and Clint Eastwood.

Eastwood, who cast him as a Russian spy in *Firefox*, won his admiration: "He doesn't direct you, he just asks you questions and talks to you nicely. The only way you know he wants a retake is when he sidles up and whispers, 'How was that for you?'"

Firefox was a flop, however, and Clarke went on the dole until he made an outstanding comeback in television; he has featured in more than 60 productions and become the most hardworking leading man of the Nineties.

Despite his small screen omnipresence he relishes the fact that he still looks like a van driver and is therefore forever being greeted by people who find his face familiar without having the foggiest idea how they know him.

"They'll look at me walking down the street and say Hiya - but in fact nobody knows who I am."

He would like to do more comedy, he says, harking back to an obscure television series called *Sleepers*, which he co-produced as well as starring in as a Russian spy. "I've got an American award for it on my wall," he says.

But he actually has no idea what he will do next, let alone a game plan for the future: "When I started out at 15 and a half going off to rep it was a joke, really. I told my mother: 'Don't worry, if I haven't made it by the time I'm 20 I'll give up. I never thought I'd still be working at this age; in fact I didn't even think I'd be this age.'"

Perhaps middle age is his Achilles heel; he feels it so acutely that he felt moved to take extreme action when he imagined he was being mocked by younger actors in *JD*, the television drama about football hooliganism.

"I call it my second *Clockwork Orange*, because I played the leader of a gang and the language was similar. I was in my late forties at the time and conscious of all these young actors like Sean Pertwee looking at me and wondering: 'What's this old fart doing here?'"

It was some prat from Stonehenge as far as they were concerned.

"One day I went out and got my head shaved, picked up this baseball bat, ran into the room where they were all sitting around and smashed a few tables up."

"It was just my way of saying: 'Hey, we're making the same movie, guys. After that they were all right.'"

As for *A Respectable Trade*, he says he hopes "viewers will come away with a little more knowledge of what we did. There's still an element of racism in this country. The quicker it subsides the better for everyone."

A Respectable Trade begins tomorrow on BBC1 at 9 pm.

It's Cusack who really wears the trousers

A BEDRIDDEN central character nears the end of an existence that's representative of the death of a whole way of life. Figures from the past keep permeating the present and, in language that often seems to overdose on its own lyricism, a vanished world is revived, though in an order that often feels loose and arbitrary. The leading role is taken by an actor who rises magnificently to a daunting occasion and turns in a tour de force that stops the heart. Haven't we been here before?

We have - in Sebastian Barry's prize-winning play, *The Steward of Christendom*, that focused on the painful contradictions embodied in the author's great-grandfather, Thomas Dunne, the last Catholic head of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and loyal servant of the British Crown before Irish independence. A peculiarly benign case of a drama-

Max Stafford-Clark's 'Our Lady of Sligo' is a tour de force, with a riveting performance from its leading actress. By Paul Taylor

list who has flourished through being well connected, Barry has, over several plays, reclaimed and reimagined the lives of his helpfully colourful ancestors resulting in an alternative history of Irish experience that is tenderly attentive to its misfits and anomalies, the divided and the ambiguously placed.

Now, in *Our Lady of Sligo*, using a memory play format highly reminiscent of *The Steward*, Barry turns his attention to the grandmother he never knew. The first woman to wear trousers in Sligo, Mai was a bold representative of moderate middle-class Catholics whose hopes of inheriting the new independent

Ireland were dashed by the hard-line de Valera and the Sinn Féin revolution. We meet her, aged 53, as she lies dying of cancer in a peeling private ward, wrestling with the unfulfilled promise of the past and visited by the husband (Nigel Terry) who tried to turn himself into a British gentleman - army major, old Nigeria hand etc - only to find that, by the time he'd achieved it, there were no posh Protestants left to impress with this anachronistic persona. Disappointment led to drink which led to the loss of inherited property which led to Mai's drink problem which led, harrowingly to the loss of a child.

In a haunting, timely and beautifully focused *Our Lady of Sligo*, Max Stafford-Clark, Sinead Cusack is quite superb in the arduous central role. Full of witty scorn and moving desperation, pugnacity and poignancy, it's a performance that succeeds in making brilliant instantaneous shifts between the present grim reality and the various Maits that are conjured up in her morphine-induced reminiscences and fantasies.

There's the sex, the arrogant woman who clings, despite all the alcoholism and failure, to the sense of herself as a bit of a legend, and

resents the humiliating way men like her husband were forced by de Valera to remove their British uniforms on the mail boat when returning from the War. There's the desolately bereaved mother, cradling a tin containing the picture of the baby her drinking may have killed and recalling, in one of Barry's many achingly precise images, its hands "opening and closing like the gestures of a tiny friend". There's a little girl pining for the security of her reliable, top hatted father. A shifting palimpsest: deeply affecting because so irreverent and un sentimental.

The jury may still be out on whether Barry is a natural dramatist as opposed to a gifted writer for whom the stage is just one forum. But, with artists of the calibre of Ms Cusack on board, the distinction becomes a trifle academic.



Brilliant: Sinead Cusack with Nigel Terry in *Our Lady of Sligo*

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

'HILARIOUS' 'BRILLIANT' 'OUTSTANDING'

'BREATHTAKING... INSPIRED.'
EVERYONE OVER FIFTEEN SHOULD SEE THIS MOVIE' ★★★★★

'BRILLIANT PERFORMANCES...'
A MOVING AND BLOODY HILARIOUS FILM... DON'T MISS IT' ★★★★★

BBC Films & Scala Present Scala Production • Shane Meadows

BOB HOSKINS

TWENTYFOURSEVEN 24/07

Bafta Nomination **BEST BRITISH FILM**

POSSIBLE BUCKLEY, THE CHARACTERS, BOB HOSKINS, NEIL MCGILL, VAN MORRISON, SHANE MEADOWS, PAUL WELLS

ODEON MEZZANINE 0181 315 4215

RITZY 01753 727 2121

AND AT CINEMAS EVERYWHERE

NOW SHOWING

DAVID LISTER'S ARTS DIARY

DELIGHTED that my seven year old daughter was studying Picasso in primary school I took her on a trip to the Tate Gallery to see Picasso's works in the raw. The Tate has 21 paintings and sculptures and a further 20 prints by Picasso.

And now that the National Gallery has agreed that the Tate should show the 20th century Masters, the Tate is the only place in London to see Picasso in any depth. So how many of his works were on display when we visited? None. Certainly, the annual re-hangs by Tate director Nicholas Serota have made the gallery increasingly exciting and challenging. But surely there should be certain key artists who are always on display, to fulfill the Gallery's educational role, if nothing else.

A Tate spokeswoman told me yesterday that two Picassos, one painting and one sculpture, were now back on display. And she assured me that at the new Tate Gallery of Modern Art at Bankside there will always be Picasso on display. But that will not open until the year 2000. In the meantime, art lovers should be able to find more than two Picassos at the country's best known centre for modern art.

And they should never have to make do with none at all. Perhaps the next meeting of gallery directors should draw up a list of essential artists whose work must always be on display.

Having had a small part in the drama of Nat Tate - namely revealing that author William Boyd had made up the American painter in one of the great literary hoaxes - I became intrigued by the numerous departures from reality in the statements and coverage that ensued. The most widely repeated "fact" in both British and American newspapers was that the New York launch party for Boyd's "biography" took place on 1 April. This, of course, was most fitting: a hoax played on the very day when hoaxes should be played. Except that the launch party was actually on 31 March. But why let a day or even a month get in the way of symbolic purity?

I read with interest a report in the *Sunday Times* that a film starring John Malkovich and Grete Scacchi will be loosely based on events at our very own Royal Opera House. But when the report went on to say there was a physical resem-

blance between Malkovich and the former ROH chairman Lord Chadlington, I was forced to conclude that either there is a shortage of opticians in Wapping, or the story was dictated by Peter Chadlington himself.

It is the constant complaint of theatre managements that punters these days decide on the spur of the moment

whether to go. Less and less do they book in advance. But it seems that Darlington is bucking the trend. The box office at the Civic Theatre has just taken an advance of £125,000 for the six-week run of Dick Whittington, which doesn't open until just before Christmas. Perhaps this week's snow confused them into a bout of seasonally-adjusted ticket buying.

artranspennine98
an exhibition of international contemporary visual art

23 may-16 august

artworks by local, national and international artists create a coast-to-coast journey through the geography and culture of the transpennine region.

join our free mailing list
0845 30 98989

(calls charged at local rates)

artranspennine98
FREEPOST NWW1782,
MANCHESTER M1 9AF
fax 0161 278 5260

مكتبة الأحرار

THE INDEPENDENT

EDITOR: ROSIE BOYCOTT; EDITOR IN CHIEF: ANDREW MARR
DEPUTY EDITOR: CHRIS BLACKHURST
ADDRESS: 1 CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000
FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Cricket must face up to glamour

IS IT all over for cricket? Yesterday was the start of the cricket season, but it is no longer the big national watershed it once was. The majority of cricket-watchers already regard the sport, like football, as year-round phenomenon. For them, there has been a lot of rather high-profile cricket played recently in the Caribbean. You have to be a bit of an expert to know that yesterday was the opening of the county cricket season. And you have to be deep into the serious Clem Attlee/John Major minority to have actually attended any of the rain-soaked matches played yesterday.

The days are long gone when the nation meekly accepted that it had two official sports, one for the winter and one for the summer. In any case, the idea of a "national sport", which has a privileged place in the education system and on television, has rightly been superseded by the idea of individual choice in a free market - the rules protecting the "crown jewel" sporting events being designed to offset the monopolistic and unfree aspects of the market in new television channels.

So how can cricket compete in a market where schoolboys almost all want to be soccer stars and clamour to spend large sums of their parents' money on Manchester United's 15th different strip in five years? Premiership football matches are regularly played in stadiums full to capacity, while county cricket players play to empty houses. Cricket in England and Wales is in danger of becoming an old man's game, incapable of supporting a national team which can compete in the world. In recent years the national team has all too easily been dismissed as a joke, although it is worth remembering that there was at one point some genuine uncertainty about the outcome in the West Indies.

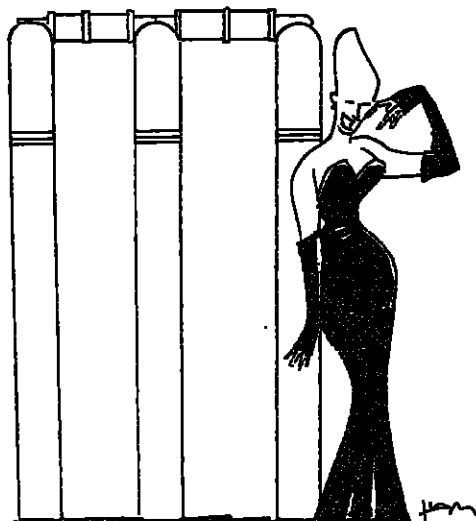
The trouble is that the cricketing authorities have not been nearly radical enough, despite being led by Lord McLaurin, the former boss of Tesco's who ought to know a thing or two about marketing. It is quite bizarre that the England team should go on a tour of the West Indies lasting a full three months, a legacy from the age of ocean liners. And then players like Michael Atherton, England's deposed captain, and Brian Lara, his West Indian opposite number, fly into the drizzle to play for English counties. Not surprisingly, both Atherton and Lara were out for ducks on soggy pitches yesterday.

One of the reasons why Glamorgan won the county championship last year and are one of the favourites to win this year is because they are a good-enough team: good enough to beat the others, but not so good that they have a lot of England players who are constantly being called away to play internationals.

The cricketing authorities have been through the mill of endless working parties about restructuring county cricket, but the latest blueprint is little more than another rehash of the same elements. What the sport really needs is to start at the other end, with the cricket that most people actually watch, which is the Test and one-day international matches.

In that sense Kerry Packer had the right idea, perhaps a couple of decades before his time. Cricket needs the big television treatment. It needs glamour, stars and cliffhangers.

Cricket's real problem is the constraint of time. As the most leisurely of sports, it has to compromise most to fit into the squeezed spaces of peo-



ple's leisure time and the limited hours of broadcast airtime. But the important compromises have already been made, and the purists' defences against coloured outfits, one-day games and floodlighting have all been breached. In the modern multi-sport, multi-channel world, these breaches are all necessary to cricket's survival in competition with pre-packaged American television sports.

Rabid commercialism is not incompatible with the idea of a game being a "national" sport, however, in the sense of selling itself as "the most popular". Soccer has shown the way in this country and American football and baseball have demonstrated it to excess in the United States. But if cricket is to retain a claim to any sort of primacy, it is going to have to take its television audience more seriously.

Secrets of Blair's sofa Cabinet

ANY constitutional expert will tell you that the governance of Britain lies not in Parliament or in the Cabinet but that the really important decisions are taken in Cabinet committee. Now open government has taken another faltering step and the latest list of memberships has appeared on the 10 Downing Street website (which gives the first clue to where power rests).

The temptation to go in for beauty-contest analysis is too great to resist. For the record then, Peter Mandelson is still top, despite not yet being a member of the Cabinet, sitting on 15 of the 27 committees. He is followed by John Prescott on 14, Gordon Brown 13, Jack Straw 12, Lord Irvine 11, and Robin Cook on 10. Tony Blair himself is only on tour, which is curious for a prime minister accused of being such a control freak and centraliser.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that, just as real decision-making moved out of Cabinet, it is now moving beyond Cabinet committees. Following the controversies of the last year, it would seem that the real decisions are made on the sofas in the back room of Number 10, and the real committee that matters is the informal group around the Prime Minister: Alastair Campbell, Peter Mandelson, Jonathan Powell and Derry Irvine. Of these, only Mr Mandelson is an elected politician.

What should be on the Internet, if we really were to have open government, would be the daily lists of those who have waited upon the prime ministerial sofa.

Help for Iraqis

PLEASE FIND enclosed a cheque for the sum of £5,000 in support of your appeal to help Iraq's innocent children. We want to take this opportunity to emphasise the distinction that Kuwaitis make between the people of Iraq and the regime of Saddam Hussein.

This distinction has been manifested in several ways. For example, in 1995, during his official visit to the UK, the Amir of Kuwait donated £500,000 to the AMAR Appeal that Emma Nicholson set up to help the destitute Iraqi refugees in southern Iran. The Amir also called for a joint effort on the part of the Arab governments to find ways to get food and medical supplies directly to the Iraqi people, without having to go through Saddam's regime.

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society regularly provides aid to Iraqi refugees in Iran and has also sent relief to the Kurds in Northern Iraq. These unpublishable humanitarian initiatives preceded all others from the Middle East.

The international community as a whole has shown great concern for the Iraqi people, but such concern has constantly met Saddam Hussein's intransigence and delaying tactics. The report of the UN Commission that was set up to assess the living conditions of ordinary Iraqis led to Security Council Resolution 706 of 15 August 1991. This allowed the Iraqi government to export \$1.6bn worth of oil every six months.

The Iraqi dictatorship, however, refused the application of this and subsequent "oil-for-food-and-medicine" resolutions in a deliberate effort to use the suffering of the Iraqi people as an instrument of blackmail to pressurise the international community into removing the sanctions completely. Saddam aimed to achieve this before the UN Special Commission completed its work of dismantling his weapons of mass destruction.

In fact, it was only after the suffering and hardship began to undermine his position by affecting the state apparatus, which he relies on to maintain his power, that Saddam agreed to implement the "oil-for-food" resolutions.

Please accept this donation as symbolic of our deep concern for the protracted and dreadful suffering of the Iraqi people, who are the victims of and helpless pawns in Saddam Hussein's relentless game plan. Dr SAAD AL-AJMI

Director
Kuwait Information Centre
Embassy of the State of Kuwait
London SW7

Legal heroin

THE Rev Peter Green has called on the Government "to consider legalising heroin" (report, 15 April).

Heroin has never been illegal in the UK. It is used regularly in the treatment of terminal pain. The 1967 Act and accompanying regulations did not make the prescribing of heroin for addicts illegal, but restricted such prescribing to those doctors with a licence from the Secretary of State. It was the reduction of heroin prescribing, on the advice of certain doctors at the Department of Health, which led to the present situation.

Where doctors have reverted to the Rolleston principles, which governed British heroin policy from the 1920s until the late 1960s, and have prescribed heroin, the crime rate, the incidence of HIV infection and in some cases the rate of new addicts have declined significantly. By contrast, the policy of prohibition has, as some of us warned 30 years ago, led to the escalation of the criminal market. In spite of earlier warnings, Britain has followed American policies in this area where they have most conspicuously failed.

Heroin is a safe drug when administered in clean conditions. Having worked with heroin addicts for 35 years, I have never known anyone die from heroin as such. I have known hundreds who have died from the adulterated material, the impurities, and the social condi-



Mariam Hamza, the four-year-old girl whose arrival in Britain this week for leukaemia treatment played a powerful symbol of the Iraqi people's suffering

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

tions in which the illicit material is taken. The case for bringing heroin back within the framework of what we were once proud to call the "British system" is a strong one.

Apart from an information pack produced by the Board for Social Responsibility in 1986, the last publication on drugs from an official Church of England source was my own booklet *The Drug Subculture: a Christian Analysis*, in 1969, which warned of the dangers of abandoning heroin prescribing. Scrutiny of the General Synod index of papers for the period from 1975 onwards yields no reference to drugs at all. In the absence of any official view, Fr Green's view is therefore one Anglican viewpoint which hopefully will contribute to a long-overdue debate.

The Rev KENNETH LEECH
St Botolph's Church
London EC3

I AGREE entirely with the Rev Peter Green. In fact, I think heroin should also be taxed and the revenue

used to treat and rehabilitate addicts and to educate children about the dangers of heroin and other drugs (including alcohol). If they then chose to go ahead and use drugs, at least they would be making an informed choice (albeit a stupid one) and they wouldn't be criminalised for it.

SUE McDONNELL
Ulrecht, Netherlands

BEFORE we get carried away into legalising heroin we need to acknowledge the innate weakness of human nature. When abortion became legalised and contraceptives freely available the result was a tenfold increase in the number of unwanted conceptions. Self-discipline is not our strong point and we need structures to help us avoid addictions that do not solve our search for lasting happiness.

M W MARWOOD
Wymondham, Norfolk

AFTER years of pretending that cannabis is no better than heroin we

now have a generation of children who appear to believe that heroin is no worse than cannabis. Why is anyone surprised?

JONATHAN JONES
Oxford

Glass houses

SEAN O'GRADY was clearly so carried away by his thesis ("Nothing new under the Dome", 16 April) that he has left us with the delightful image of Paxman (sic) building the Crystal Palace of 1851.

I have no idea how Joseph Paxton would have measured up as a television interviewer, had that medium been available to him. But I do know that his magnificent building silenced the prophets of doom who forecast disaster for the Great Exhibition in 1851. Richard Rogers' great Dome in Greenwich will, I am sure, have a similar effect on today's Jeremiahs.

NICK RAYNSFORD MP
(Greenwich and Woolwich, Lab)
House of Commons

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"In opposition. I found toadying Tories creepy. I wouldn't have expected Labour MPs to be the same, but they are" — Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development.

"Some men dash for the shelter of a local hostelry at the first gathering clouds of a domestic argument. Not me. I slip out quietly and head for the local Homebase, where I scan the shelves until I think the coast is clear at home" — Terry Major-Ball.

"Buckingham Palace is, frankly, ugly and cold, with an unpleasant sort of design. It is not the sort of

place you would take to your heart and it should be destroyed" — Barry Sheerman, Labour MP, who is launching a Millennium Destruction Challenge.

"William Hague's announcement that he stays away from church most weeks must offer the best hope yet for a new religious revival" — Auberon Waugh.

"Tony Banks has gone through fascinating changes as he accepts new responsibilities. We might just discover he is a repressed Spurs fan" — Arturo Varchevker, Psychiatrist, on the Sports Minister, a devoted Chelsea supporter.

LETTER from THE EDITOR

I SPENT Easter weekend in our new family cottage in Normandy. Our family, I ought to explain, is a bit on the complicated side. The cottage used to be owned by my step-son's mother, the late novelist Jill Neville, and it is now owned by her son Luke (my step-son), my daughter, Daisy, and my step-daughter, Miranda, daughter of an earlier partner of the man who was successively married to Jill and me, Clear?

On a cold and rainy Easter Saturday morning we all went to sign the sale documents at the offices of the local *notaire*. Like most people confronted with our complex step-family arrangement, she was puzzled. Step families just aren't meant to work so well. It is nice to be the exception that proves the rule. The *notaire's* office was in our local town, St Georges D'Ornay, a community that was obliterated in the days following the D-Day landings on the beaches around Arromanches. 10 miles to the north. The area is almost devoid of tourists. The many rural graveyards are a sad record of the civilian deaths that occurred in the ghastly June days following the invasion.

Twenty-four years later, there was fighting of a different kind in France: the student riots of 1968, when 10 million workers went on strike and France was plunged into civil chaos. One of Jill Neville's best books, *The Love Germ* (reissued this month by Verso), a community that was obliterated in the days following the riots), wonderfully captures those heady days in Paris when lawyers and doctors and intellectuals briefly joined forces with blue-collar workers to challenge the entire political system.

Jill was then the girlfriend of Angelo Quattrocchi, an Italian anarchist and poet, who reported the May 1968 revolution for the Italian newspaper *Avanti*. Angelo's reports, also reissued by Verso under the title *The Beginning of the End*, form a perfect accompaniment to Jill's exuberant novel. Jill and Angelo lived together in the Latin Quarter, and while Angelo (in *The Love Germ* he appears as the heroine's scruffy lover, Giorgio) dodges police and tear gas, Jill's autobiographical heroine, Polly, wrestles with her desires to be free and liberated while also fetching wine, washing dirty socks and scrubbing Giorgio's back as he reclines in her bath after a hard day manning the barricades. Brilliantly, she recalls this year of change, with Paris's turmoil the perfect background to what clever, intellectual women the world over were struggling to achieve: Giorgio might be fighting on the brick-strewn boulevards to bring down the system and change the world, but in the kitchen and the bedroom he wanted his women well and truly in their place.

TWO MONTHS ago, Robert Fisk reported on the plight of cancer-stricken children in Iraq. His accounts were moving and provocative - not least because at that time this country was on the verge of raining down more bombs on Iraq, and it was felt, the high incidence of childhood cancers, especially leukaemia, might just have something to do with previous allied onslaughts against Saddam's people.

Reading Robert's gripping accounts I was overtaken by rage

Lessons from Ulster

THERE ARE two features of interest in the proposals for Northern Ireland.

The electoral system for the Northern Ireland Assembly is the single transferable vote, which enables electors to choose between candidates as well as parties, while retaining the geographical link between members and their constituencies.

There is to be a human rights commission to provide an affordable mechanism for people to assert their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights once this has been enacted into domestic law.

Why are the rest of us in the UK being denied these benefits?
PHILIP GOLDENBERG
Woking, Surrey

IF THE Unionist hardliners succeed in wrecking the Northern Ireland peace process, may we then have a referendum here to decide if the province should remain in the United Kingdom?

J W BELL
Ilkley, West Yorkshire

IAN PAISLEY is most fully himself when he says "No". Perhaps some smart drafting of the referendum question might help. How about "Do you reject the peace agreement?"
SEAN MACKEN
Harrow, Middlesex

Nightingales are back

IT MAY be true that nightingales are becoming generally more scarce (report, 16 April), but the reverse seems to be the case in this area. Several can usually be heard on and around Layer Breton Heath, south of Colchester, from early May onwards, which has happened only in the last 10 years or so.

Essex Naturalists' Trust reserve at Fingringhoe Wick on the Colne estuary is a very well-known nightingale haunt. Some appear to have forgotten their skulking habits: they will continue to sing from small oak trees, clearly visible in broad daylight, often within feet of the observer.

TIM DENNIS
Bitch, Essex

Lonely dogs

SO THE growing number of the nation's dogs who are believed to be suffering from separation anxiety are to be treated with drugs to enable them to accept the long absences of their owners at work (report, 16 April). How long, one wonders, will it be before the nation's childcare "experts" advocate a similar course of action for the increasing number of children under three who, being deposited for long hours in day nurseries whilst their mothers are "at work", are also at risk of developing both separation anxiety and attachment disorder.

Mrs CH ALEXANDER
Brentwood, Essex

List in 'Time'

YOU TAKE *Time* magazine to task for its "all-white, North Atlantic" quintet of leaders and revolutionaries who most influenced world events this century (leading article, 6 April). *Time* in fact named 20 such leaders and they include Mohandas Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, Ayatollah Khomeini, Mao Tse-tung, Nelson Mandela, the Unknown Rebel (of Tiananmen Square) and Martin Luther King.

CHRISTOPHER REDMAN
Editor
Time Atlantic
London WC2

Moore is less

I REVELLED in Tom Lubbock's assault on the inflated reputation of Henry Moore (14 April). I have always maintained that we needed Moore like we needed a hole in the head.

BEVIS HILLIER
London WC2

Do you need a Mayor?



fish food

هناك من لا يعمل

ke stab
Jack



Do you need a First Minister or a Mayor? I'm available ...



DAVID
AARONOVITCH
SUBMITS A JOB
APPLICATION

IT'S Trevor Phillips' fault for fanning around. My fellow columnist and old friend has had plenty of time to confirm or deny that he wants to be the first Mayor of London, and has steadfastly refused to be drawn. Well, scruple is all very well, but time is running out. Someone needs to mount a convincing challenge to Lord Archer's burgeoning campaign; someone who is the novelist's equal in charisma and intellect. And that someone, dear readers, I would humbly submit, is me.

I should say, from the outset, that the mayoralty of the capital is not the only office that I will be contesting. One of the many achievements of the current government since the election has been to create a number of intriguing posts for men and women of a particular talent. There are many of us who recognise that we are not cut out to be, say, Prime Minister or Chancellor of the Exchequer. The sums of money are too large, the problems too intractable, the evenings too cluttered with celebrities.

But neither can we stomach the sense of futility and powerlessness which must be the common experience of all but the most deluded of back bench MPs. So we have been searching for the happy medium, the job that confers just sufficient puissance, prestige and reward to motivate, without requiring one to meet with Benjamin Netanyahu or Bernie Ecclestone.

Thanks to Mr Blair there will shortly be no fewer than four such positions available, all of them attractive in their own way. There is the First Ministership of Scotland. And who (if you will forgive the play on words) would not want to be the first First Minister of such an attractive country? Unless, of course, one was already the First Secretary of the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff. Both will inhabit nice, purpose-built new offices and have a few billions to spend, while not having to

worry about armies and chemical warfare. Penultimately (though we should not count our chickens) there looks set to be a First Minister for Northern Ireland.

I am not over optimistic about my chances of winning any of these three Firstships. For a start I am not Welsh, Scots or Northern Irish – and while birth seems to be no impediment for outsiders in London, it appears to be a considerable handicap for Londoners outside. Also I have first to contest – and then to win – seats in the relevant assembly or parliament, and so far I am not having much luck in wooing the electors of Kroydant West, Llanfihangel Central or the Giant's Causeway. I am worried too, that the leadership of the Ulster Unionist Party may elude me.

Which leaves London. And what a marvellous job that is! A budget of £3.3bn (enough to make a difference, not so much that you lose track of it), a salary of 90 grand (less than an editor, but more than a columnist) and a staff of 250 (impressive but manageable). Furthermore, in addition to the two main functions (getting tough with motorists and trying to attract the Olympics to London), the Mayor is charged with "promoting biodiversity". Well, I can hardly think of anything that I'd rather promote.

So why me? I am a Londoner who has lived in the capital so long that I've even managed a stint south of the river. I often appear on television (though always after midnight, for some reason) and am familiar with its little tricks and artifices. I am a reasonable public speaker which, given the stipulation that "there will be a six-monthly opportunity for voters to question the Mayor directly", is not unimportant.

My manifesto will include commitments to pedestrianise the whole area from Knightsbridge in the west to the City in the east, to charge motorists from the suburbs £20 a time for entering London at all (the revenue raised to be spent on new cycle-only roads), and to outlaw company parking altogether. I will also establish London at the Cutting Edge of the new global information economy, though I am working on the details of that right now.

So why am I telling you all this? Well, because I need your support. Though journalists wishing to go into politics are not as rare as they used to be, they still face a great deal of suspicion from conventional politicians. Look at how nasty that appalling MP Diane Abbott has been about Trevor, writing him off as a broadcaster and journalist, who has done nothing more than run the National Union of Students. Maybe Diane, but that still puts him up one big one on you!

Also, like Tony Blair, I am not over-enthused of the Labour Party, whose backing I need to be able to win. Unfortunately, unlike Tony Blair, I am therefore not a member of the Labour Party (my mother always said that I had a tendency towards pedantry). Which means that I have somehow to convince the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party that it would be a good idea were they to make me their candidate. A tall order, eh?

But not if you help me. If every reader of this column writes to The Prime Minister, c/o Alastair Campbell, 10, Downing St, etc, and urges him to throw his weight behind my mayoral campaign, I think I can do it. Really.

So remember – "double A for London". Thank you.

Does any movie have the right to call this brave man a coward?



TREVOR
PHILIPS

TITANIC LIES IN FICTION

IF YOU were defamed, what would your reputation be worth? Or to put it precisely, what sort of damages would a court award? Nelson Mandela's would probably get a sum equal to the Bank of England's gold reserves; Bill Clinton might get the price of a good night out at Stringfellow's; Jonathan Aitken would almost certainly have to pay back a large whack of his fortune, since his reputation is now a minus. It's a good game: but for the relatives of the first officer of the Titanic it has become a rather grim one.

The young man, named William Murdoch, died on the original boat. In the movie he is portrayed as a craven coward, panicked into shooting two passengers, and then himself. The truth is that Murdoch was apparently as brave as they come, and acquitted himself with honour in the evacuation. He saved several lives and even gave up his own lifebelt so that another could survive. His family has demanded that his reputation be restored by the film's makers. This seems only reasonable; it appears that they told the filmmakers that they had got it wrong before the production was shot, yet no changes were made to the script. As a result there are now literally hundreds of millions of people who probably believe that Murdoch was a villain, and who, were they ever to meet any of his relatives, would treat him accordingly.

The task of making recompense should not be huge for such a successful movie. The family wanted a correction at the end of the video. What they got was an apology and a small donation to First Officer Murdoch's memorial in his home town of Dalbeattie. The family and local people are naturally disappointed. Surely, any man or woman's memory is worth more than such a small gesture. However these are the days of historical revisionism in the service of entertainment. A shudder went through me when I heard that Hollywood's arch-conspiracy theorist, Oliver Stone, plans to "do" Martin Luther King next. I can't imagine



The real, brave, William Murdoch, First Officer on the Titanic Frank Ryan

ine who will be in the firing line for that: the CIA, LBJ, the KKK, and Malcolm X probably. Yes, Malcolm died first, but in a Stone movie anything is

be afforded the benefit of the doubt? I know that this would be a hard one to sell to the victims of Pol Pot or Adolf Hitler, but even for those who seem to

southern sassenachs of Soho. In its details this is a complex argument. But the truth that there is inequity is undeniable, and that is perhaps as much as

I myself have become a minor villain in Scotland this week merely for pointing out that the country's citizens do carry a rather large premium in public expenditure

possible. But historical revisionism doesn't have to be all bad; perhaps instead of tearing down heroes, we might occasionally benefit from trying to reassess, even understand those we have dismissed as evil beyond redemption. How many historical villains could be rehabilitated if we applied the process of the courts to their reputations?

Could Judas Iscariot now go to a heavenly judge and claim that he was misunderstood? After all, he may genuinely have thought he was doing the right thing. And anyway, he was part of the plan dreamed up by the Big Man himself.

Is there any candidate for public obloquy who should not

be open and shut cases, should we not from time to time revisit the great evils of our history, if only to reassure ourselves that we have not so degraded our values that we have started to forgive the unforgivable? I would not argue for endless *Trials of ...*, but having been involved in one such "trial" in the last few days (that of Enoch Powell, by no means a simple black and white case) I can say that such reassessments can be surprisingly illuminating.

I myself seem to have become a minor villain in Scotland this week merely for pointing out that the country's citizens carry a rather large premium in public expenditure – they get some 30 per cent more out of the public purse than do the soft

I should expect to get across. However, having spent the week being treated as though I had personally applied the executioner's blade to William Wallace's neck, I am beginning to have my doubts about the wisdom of bothering to say anything even remotely complex in public. The fact that it's complex doesn't make it untrue; but public debate is now painted in bright, bold, primary colours with no room for texture or subtlety. So he it.

I do not, of course mind notoriety. The medium in which I work, television, is no place for namby-pamby subtlety: the current vogue for fly-on-the-wall documentaries is driven by the delicious spectacle of seeing characters whom we think we have come to know well being humiliated. They may be learner drivers, hotel waiters, holiday reps, or just yobs on holiday; but the simple charm of seeing hateful people humbled has not yet failed to attract the public. But are the media now having to turn relatively normal people into monsters in order to feed the public appetite for their execution? It is at the point at which such unknowns as William Murdoch become famously bad in order to make the story work that I start to become uneasy.

This does not mean that we can never talk about evil without pretending there are two sides to every coin. In real life there may be few people who can legitimately be described as all bad. However, creative art should have the right to create characters and evoke scenes which sicken us; that is the artist's job, in part – to hold up to the light those aspects of our lives we'd rather not face, and showing them in their undiluted wickedness. The woman artist who has decided that the purchasers of her work must perform some sexual act with her may well be making an important statement about the relationship between artists and their patrons: on the other hand she may just be sensationalising bad paintings, or just, metaphorically speaking, pulling all our plonkers. As long as she doesn't frighten the horses, she should be allowed to get on with it.

Similarly, it slightly depresses me to hear the chorus of howls at Eric Clapton's evocation of domestic violence, "Sick and Tired". On that song he wonders whether he should blow a woman's brains out, singing: "Then you won't bother me no more." Does anybody imagine this is not part of the human experience today? There is no encouragement to such a step in the song, and in Clapton's music there is no glamour in its presentation. The complainants are missing the point.

Of course, we need to treat real people with integrity and sensitivity. But imagining that we can eliminate human evil, weakness, and frailty by shutting our eyes to their presence is the sort of thinking that drove the Titanic to its doom. We will never avoid icebergs if we tell ourselves that they are not there.

British food is now edible, but in France ...



CLAUDIA
RODEN
THE FOOD
OF NATIONS

WHEN I first came to London in the 1950s to study art at St Martin's I could not believe food could be so awful. I had just spent three years in a Paris lycée as one of the few weekly boarders. The state school catered for 2,000 pupils but we were given wonderful three-course meals with wine every day. On the weekly outings with my brothers and other Egyptian students we ate for very little money delicious food at little bistros you could then find on every corner.

Things have changed so much in both Britain and France that some people think the situation is reversed. But British food really came so far in our new "cool Britannia" that

it now surpasses that of our French neighbours. From the Middle Ages when French cooks headed the kitchens of the royal courts of Europe up to the Eighties, when every embassy and every grand restaurant in the world offered a French menu, France has dominated the cooking of the planet. Visitors fell in love with the country because its food was the best they had ever eaten.

But now the French are worried that the golden age of French cuisine has passed. Italian and other cuisines have replaced it in the affections of the Anglo-Saxon world, and while our burgeoning restaurant scene in London is exploding with extraordinary vitality, restaurants in Paris have been going through their worst times. The American press regularly proclaims that they are archaic and stagnant and that San Francisco, New York, Sydney and London are the new capitals of gastronomy.

Our new Anglo-Saxon cuisine is an eclectic magpie cuisine of ideas and flavours plucked from many different countries. The impetus came from *nouvelle cuisine*, and now it responds mainly to fashions in California. It is quick and easy stuff which untrained chefs can easily pick up. It can be delicious and exciting but it can also be a mishmash.

The French restaurant industry has been going through a crisis for several years. This is partly due to the recession. The French are afraid to spend and costs are high. Starred restaurants have been forced into luxurious tableware and decor and a high staff ratio by Michelin. The great ones now rely on tourists – mainly Americans – for 60 per cent of their trade. Like *haute couture* houses with their ready to wear lines, top restaurants have opened small bistros with their signature charging as little as £20 to £30. The money they lose in their higher range they make in their lower. The success of those "modern bistros", which have caused a trend and been emulated by young chefs all over Paris, is for the consumers the great silver lining behind the crisis. You can eat wonderful food and drink reasonable wines in a pleasant, unfussy, convivial atmosphere for much less money than in London.

The large brasseries with their quick all-day service, classic menus and animated ambience are also doing very well. The restaurants that have suffered are those who were not quite great and could not keep their prices down. Some have survived by selling artisanal products, lunch time snacks for delivering in offices and ready meals to take home in the evening. But many have been forced to close.

The root of the crisis is not just economic – it is also social. According to Thierry Delmas, head of the Ecole de Cuisine Ferrandi, which is part of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the rot started in the Sixties when women were liberated, went out to work, and gave up on cooking. Children ate in school canteens and in the fast food establishments that drove out the old neighbourhood bistros, and at home were given tinned or frozen foods. A whole generation grew up without the

memory of good home cooking or what good ingredients taste like. For this generation food is no longer the primary source of pleasure.

The third reason for the crisis is the art of French cooking itself, which has gone through a period of change and trauma, and a crisis of identity. In the Seventies a few top chefs were invited to the World Fair in Japan, and returned with ideas about presentation, which was the origin of *nouvelle cuisine*. At the time, the *Gault et Millau* guide (which is as important as the Michelin) championed the movement and pushed cooks to abandon tradition and invent. Where you could previously go on gastronomic tours through France and eat different foods in each region, you began to find the same things everywhere. Now Henri Gault and Christian Millau say they regret what they have done to French cuisine.

The French became unhappy and wanted their old cuisine back. After a lot of soul searching, manifestos, opinion polls and forums, the overwhelming consensus was to go back to provincial regional French cooking or *la cuisine des terroirs*. *Haute cuisine* is now associated with hackneyed, boring dishes which are over-elaborate and heavy with butter and cream sauces. *Cuisine des terroirs* is a kind of fundamental-

AWARD-WINNING FOOD & DRINK IN THE INDEPENDENT

Claudia Roden was this week awarded the Glenfiddich Award for Food/Book of the Year for her 'Book of Jewish Food' (Viking). Two of the Independent on Sunday's food writers, Hugh Fearnley-Whittinghall and Richard Ertlach, also won awards; and Simon Hopkinson, whose beefs about British butchers can be found in today's magazine, won the award for Newspaper/Cookery Writer of the Year.

Prague
from
£198
return inc. taxes

Belfast
from
£69*
return inc. taxes

All we cut is the price.

Return fares from London Heathrow.

For these and many more special European fares, contact your travel agent or call us (local rate) on

0845 6071637

More fares available from other airports in UK and Ireland.

British Midland
The Airline for Europe

*Fares limited availability on selected dates and flights. Subject to availability. Excludes Saturday night stays. Flight prices include UK and foreign taxes. See our website for full details. *114 days advance booking required at advertised price level. Cash only bookings.

Malays' £44m rescues Laura Ashley

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

LAURA ASHLEY, the troubled fashion and home furnishings retailer, was rescued from potential financial collapse yesterday when a Malaysian backer agreed to invest £44m in the business in return for a 40 per cent stake. However, analysts still questioned whether the funding would be sufficient to address

the ailing group's problems. MUI, a Kuala Lumpur-based conglomerate with interests ranging from department stores to cement, is paying 28p per share for 160m new shares. The funds will be used to implement a recovery programme in America, reduce debts and fund capital expenditure.

The company said its poor performance had led to concerns about breaching its banking covenants and that its banks had refused to provide additional facilities in the US beyond 3 May.

Spelling out the seriousness of the group's position, the board said it would be sending a circular to shareholders warning that if investors turned down the rescue package the directors would be "forced to seek an alternative source of finance".

The lifeline came as Laura Ashley reported losses of £25m for last year, debts of £30m and sharp sales declines across its



A Laura Ashley store in west London. The company is striving to reduce price cutting

Photograph: Neville Elder

major markets even though its stores have been slashing prices by up to 25 per cent.

David Hoare, who replaced Ann Iverson as chief executive last year, said: "Obviously the company's record is sobering but we have a good platform and we will take a commercial approach. Some of the things we do will not be very exciting but we believe they will deliver results in baby steps."

However, analysts said a turnaround would take time. "It's going to be a very, very long haul," one said. "There is no quick fix and I can't see them making a profit for several years." Another said: "I just wonder if this is enough of a life-

line. It only enables them to close a few of the larger stores in the US that are causing the problems. Something more radical may have been needed but I don't imagine there was a queue of suitors out there."

Sir Bernard Ashley, Laura Ashley's widow, has said he will vote in favour of the deal as has Jusco, the company's Japanese investor. The deal means that three investors will control 70 per cent of Laura Ashley shares. MUI will control 40 per cent. Sir Bernard Ashley will see his stake reduced from 35 per cent to 21 per cent and Jusco's stake will fall from 15 per cent to 9 per cent.

Four directors of MUI will

join the Laura Ashley board including the group's chairman and chief executive, Dr Kay Peng Khoo. He said: "Laura Ashley is one of the world's leading brands and has clear potential despite the recent setbacks. We will be a long-term investor and look forward to helping turn around."

Mr Hoare said the group would remain in garments and home furnishings. However it will seek to become a lifestyle brand and continue its policy of licensing and franchising the Laura Ashley name for products such as perfume, sunglasses, watches and paint. The rescue cash injection came alongside a dismal set of

results. The figures were damaged by exceptional charges of £24m including £9m for the closure of the group's manufacturing operations and £9.4m for the closure of six larger format stores in the US which were the brainchild of Ann Iverson. In two years she steered the group towards opening 26 per cent more space in America. But sales grew by just 4 per cent.

Like for like sales were down by 15 per cent across the group in the first 10 weeks for the year with a 20 per cent fall in the US. Sales have fallen as the stores move away from price cutting. Laura Ashley shares closed 2p higher at 35.5p. They stood at 219p 18 months ago.

Green light for Texas Energy bid

By Peter Thal Larsen

TEXAS UTILITIES, the US electricity firm, was yesterday cleared to pursue its £4.4bn bid for The Energy Group, the coal and electricity firm which owns Eastern Electricity, after Margaret Beckett, trade secretary, decided not to refer the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The decision clears the way for the final stage of the battle for control of Energy, which has been raging for almost a year. PacifiCorp, another US utility, has also tabled an offer for the group, although its 820p a share cash offer is 20p less than Texas' bid.

Last night, PacifiCorp refused to comment on whether it planned to increase its offer. Both bidders effectively have until next Friday to post their final offers to shareholders.

The lack of a response surprised analysts, who said PacifiCorp would have been able to plan its response well before the decision was announced.

Energy Group shares jumped 8p to 85.2p as investors anticipated a renewed bidding war. However US institutional investors were also said to be attracted by Texas Group's all-share alternative offer, which is currently worth about 86.5p.

In order to receive Mrs Beckett's blessing, Texas pledged to give enough information to regulate Eastern Electricity and that the company would be given sufficient resources for the introduction of electricity competition in September.

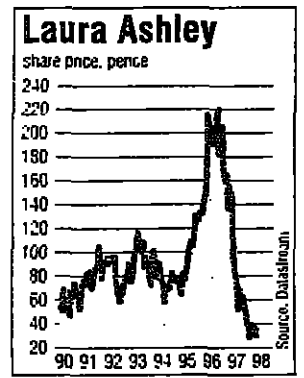
Energy Group was created as part of the demerger of the Hanson conglomerate, and combines the businesses of Eastern Electricity and Peabody, the coal producer.

Erle Nye, chairman and chief executive of Texas, said he was "delighted" with the decision, adding that Texas' offer "clearly represents superior value for Energy Group shareholders."

PacifiCorp and Energy have been locked in a battle since February, when PacifiCorp tabled an agreed 765p a share bid after the Monopolies and Mergers Commission ruled that it could buy the company. That was trumped by Texas. The two increased their offers until reaching the current stalemate.

Energy Group's board is refusing to recommend either bid until the two parties have made their final offers.

Both sides have also been buying shares. Texas owns 21.96 per cent of Energy, while PacifiCorp has an 8.8 per cent stake.



US deficit adds pressure on Japan

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

A BIG INCREASE in the US trade deficit in February prompted new calls for action by the Japanese government from US officials yesterday. Weaker demand for American goods by Japan and other Asian countries took the shortfall between exports and imports to the highest level since the late 1980s.

Fear of intervention by the Bank of Japan to support the yen kept the reaction in the currency markets muted. The dollar fell further against the yen, however, with traders seeing the ¥132 as the level that would bring the Bank of Japan back into the market.

The pound fell back with the dollar, losing a penny to reach just under Dm3.05. The sterling

index fell 0.5 to 107.6. Gordon Brown repeated yesterday the Government's commitment in principle to joining the single European currency if it is in Britain's economic interest, subject to a referendum "early in the next parliament". In a speech in New York, the Chancellor said: "Our strategy is to prepare and then decide."

A further drop in the Tokyo stock market overnight, the result of concerns about the weak Japanese economy and disappointment about the outcome of this week's G7 meeting, took share prices lower in London yesterday. The FTSE 100 index ended 80 lower at 5,922.2, the first time in more than two weeks it had closed below the 6,000 mark.

However, Wall Street remained quiet after Thursday's 86 point fall. Although investors

took profits on internet stocks, which had sizzled higher earlier in the week, the Dow Jones index was just 3 points lower at 9,073.58 by late morning. Fresh, though vague, rumours of a merger involving American Express Bank helped prevent shares declining.

Fears that the long-awaited

stock market correction had arrived therefore proved premature. But analysts noted that the meeting of G7 finance ministers earlier in the week had expressed some concern that shares were overvalued and could face a sharp fall.

Yesterday's figures showed that the US deficit on trade in

goods and services climbed to \$12.1bn in February, approaching the record shortfalls seen in 1987. The gap in trade in goods with Japan, a politically sensitive figure, increased to \$5.3bn from \$4.4bn in January.

Lower exports provided the main explanation for the disappointing figure. Import vol-

umes climbed by 1 per cent but the strong dollar meant that they fell by 1 per cent in value.

More reassuring were figures showing that growth in industrial output was muted last month, climbing by just 0.2 per cent. Thanks to earlier revisions, industrial production rose at an annual rate of 0.9 per cent in the first quarter of 1998, sharply down from the 7.2 per cent expansion in the final quarter of last year. Capacity use in manufacturing declined to the lowest rate for two years.

With manufacturing slowing and exports also holding back growth, yesterday's figures reassured the financial markets that the Federal Reserve was unlikely to raise short-term interest rates any time soon.

The Bundesbank Council left German interest rates unchanged yesterday.



Gordon Brown, centre, with Eddie George, Bank of England Governor, left, and Fed chairman Alan Greenspan in Washington

Lucky Jim leaves EMI with a £12m payoff More wins bus shelter deal

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

EMI yesterday agreed to pay a compensation package of £12m to Jim Fiffeld, the departing head of its music division in the US, just weeks after denying the package would be anywhere near that sum.

The pay-off follows Mr Fiffeld's resignation yesterday and is believed to be a record for a main board director of a

British public company. It brings to more than £30m the sum that Mr Fiffeld has been awarded by EMI in the last two years in the form of salary, bonuses, share options and contractual payments.

It follows an estimated pay-off of \$50m (£30m) made by EMI last year to Charles Koppelman, head of EMI-Capitol Music in America. However, he was not a main board director and EMI has not confirmed the figure.

Mr Fiffeld is known as "Lucky Jim" because of his lavish pay. His pay-off will include £6.7m for the early termination of his contract. He will also receive immediate payment of £6.15m for pension contributions. He will be able to exercise his share options, which are worth £2m.

The pay-off comes just weeks after he was given £8.7m of shares as a result of a "restricted share award". Mr Fiffeld

earned almost £7m last year.

One shareholder said the pay-off was only what Mr Fiffeld was entitled to under the terms of his contract but that the package was symptomatic of a wider issue. "The fact is that people earn more in America. And as industries become more global, whether it is the music business or pharmaceuticals we are going to keep coming up against this problem."

Mr Fiffeld will not be re-

placed directly but two other board appointments were announced yesterday. Ken Berry, chief executive of EMI recorded music, will join the EMI board along with Martin Bandier, head of EMI's music publishing division. Simon Duffy, finance director, has been appointed joint deputy chairman.

EMI has said it hopes to cover the costs of Mr Fiffeld's package by the closure of its New York office.

By Peter Thal Larsen

MORE GROUP, the outdoor advertising operator facing a bid from Decaux, the French group, could soon be putting its bus shelters directly under its rival's UK head office in West London.

LT-Adshel, More's joint venture with London Transport, has won a multi-million pound eight-year contract from Hammer-smith Council to provide bus shelters throughout the borough.

More won the contract, believed to be worth about £3m, in a competition against Decaux with the help of a new design of stainless steel bus shelters. It is now examining the possibility of putting one of the shelters close to Decaux's headquarters on Goldhawk road. "We'll see if we can put the biggest shelter in London there," said one More employee.

The Office of Fair Trading is examining whether to refer Decaux's bid to the Monopolies

and Mergers Commission. Opponents of the deal argue that it would bring together the two dominant players in the market for street furniture - such as bus shelters and street toilets - giving local authorities no choice of supplier. But Decaux insists this is just one small part of the outdoor advertising market.

Yesterday was the deadline for submissions to the OFT, and the regulator is expected to announce its ruling within the next two weeks.

STOCK MARKETS

| Index | Close | Change | Change (%) | 52 wk high | 52 wk low | Yield (%) |
|----------------|----------|---------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| FTSE 100 | 5922.20 | -79.80 | -1.33 | 6150.50 | 4291.50 | 3.30 |
| FTSE 250 | 3519.20 | -17.00 | -0.32 | 3562.80 | 2384.20 | 2.97 |
| FTSE 350 | 2847.80 | -30.90 | -1.14 | 2938.70 | 2113.60 | 3.31 |
| FTSE All Share | 2777.16 | -30.52 | -1.08 | 2861.12 | 2088.10 | 3.29 |
| FTSE SmallCap | 1405.70 | -5.60 | -0.25 | 1415.30 | 1225.20 | 3.24 |
| FTSE Floating | 1086.70 | 0.40 | 0.04 | 1095.70 | 965.90 | 1.07 |
| FTSE AIM | 9085.39 | 11.96 | 0.13 | 9167.76 | 6617.26 | 1.54 |
| Dow Jones | 9085.39 | -11.96 | -0.13 | 9167.76 | 6617.26 | 1.54 |
| Nikkei | 15703.80 | -179.97 | -1.13 | 15810.73 | 14488.21 | 0.97 |
| Hong Kong | 11001.32 | -186.36 | -1.67 | 11200.31 | 7920.13 | 3.35 |
| Dax | 5268.75 | -55.39 | -1.04 | 5411.07 | 3325.01 | 1.54 |

INTEREST RATES

| Short sterling | UK 10 year gilt | US long bond |
|---|--|--|
| 3 month 1 yr 5 yr | 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr | 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr |
| UK 7.82 1.10 7.51 0.54 5.75 -1.70 3.68 -1.99 | US 5.69 -0.16 5.84 -0.53 5.57 -1.26 5.86 -1.20 | Japan 0.67 0.11 0.68 -0.01 1.80 -0.58 2.40 -0.55 |
| Germany 3.64 0.42 3.85 0.56 1.46 -0.55 5.40 -1.23 | | |

CURRENCIES

| \$/£ | DM/£ | ¥/£ |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| at 5pm | at 5pm | at 5pm |
| Dollar 1.6850 -0.05c 1.6802 | Sterling 0.5985 +0.23p 0.6134 | D-Mark 1.8084 +0.08p 1.7927 |
| Yen 222.15 +0.24 225.33 | Yen 131.87 +0.63 125.94 | Yen 108.50 +0.00 105.90 |

TOURIST RATES

| Australia (\$) | 2.5026 | Malta (lira) | 0.6401 |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------------|---------|
| Austria (schilling) | 20.83 | Netherlands (guilder) | 12.89 |
| Belgium (franc) | 61.22 | New Zealand (\$) | 3.3379 |
| Canada (\$) | 2.3652 | Norway (krone) | 12.38 |
| Cyprus (pound) | 0.8633 | Portugal (escudo) | 301.76 |
| Denmark (krone) | 11.37 | Saudi Arabia (riyal) | 6.1665 |
| Finland (markka) | 9.0728 | Singapore (\$) | 2.5662 |
| France (franc) | 8.9343 | Spain (peseta) | 251.35 |
| Germany (mark) | 2.9736 | South Africa (rand) | 8.2174 |
| Greece (drachma) | 512.75 | Sweden (krona) | 12.80 |
| Hong Kong (\$) | 1272 | Switzerland (franc) | 2.4795 |
| Ireland (pound) | 1.1743 | Thailand (baht) | 55.63 |
| India (rupee) | 81.77 | Turkey (lira) | 402.025 |
| Israel (shekel) | 5.8156 | USA (\$) | 1.8536 |
| Italy (lira) | 2045 | | |
| Japan (yen) | 220.88 | | |
| Malaysia (ringgit) | 6.0227 | | |

Rates for information purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Green light for Texas Energy



JEREMY WARNER
ON WHY
COMMUNITARIAN
CAPITALISM MAY
BE THE WAY OF
THE FUTURE
AFTER ALL

Stakeholding gone mad, or is this the future?

HOW ABOUT this for a chairman's statement? "After careful consideration, the board has decided that in future the company will put more emphasis on employment than profit. Our profit margin is going to be 6 per cent - no higher, no lower. If it looks likely we will make more money than expected, then we will take on more orders at lower prices in order to adjust the figure. We are a manufacturing company and the main purpose of what we do is to use facilities and labour in a stable manner and at maximum capacity."

"If we make too much money on what we produce, it drives up the price of other products, which is bad for everyone. The social effects of what we do must be our primary consideration. We will not, I repeat not, give our shareholders precedence. I know that if we were an American company we would come under intense criticism for saying these things, and they get me into trouble with my finance department. But we do not need to advertise to foreigners to get them to buy our stock. If our stock has no appeal for investors, they can sell it straight away. Our employees have no such freedom of choice, and it is primarily for them that we exist."

OK, so no one would say that in a chairman's statement, would they. So shocking would such a thing be for a City or Wall Street audience, that the chairman who did

would be hung from the nearest lamppost - no gold watch, no pay-off, no pension. They think differently in Japan, however, and believe it or not, this is what the chairman of one of Japan's biggest companies, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, did say. And only a few months ago too, so the crisis of the Far East and his own domestic economy has plainly done nothing to change his view of how companies should be run.

Up until recently, it was fashionable to look longingly at these shining examples of communitarian capitalism and question why it was not possible to have it here in Britain too. Socially it seemed so much more acceptable than our own market-driven forms of capitalism. What's more, it seemed to be economically more successful too. While our shipbuilding industry withered and died, Mitsubishi thrived and grew. New Labour came to use companies like it as a model for its vision of a "stakeholder" economy in which companies would come to serve the interests of employees and customers as much as investors.

Then came the meltdown in the Far East, which again focused attention on Japan's own particular economic paralysis. The debate has since swung full circle. The American, free market model seems fully vindicated: the best way of creating prosperity and employment is to allow capital to chase the best returns, to give entre-

preneurs a completely free hand in the pursuit of wealth for the sake of it. Business can only properly serve the community, we now have to accept, if it is selfish and slavishly serves the interests of its shareholders to the exclusion of all else.

Shareholder value has been a persistent mantra throughout my time as a financial journalist, but I don't recall it ever being in quite such strong and vibrant voice as it is today. We've even got a new derogatory term for the communitarian capitalism of the Far East - crony capitalism - and all right-thinking people now condemn it as corrupt, inefficient, and ultimately doomed.

Nothing is for ever, however, and it is testimony to how strongly embedded in the culture and the national psyche of Japan the old ways are that the chairman of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Kenjiro Aikawa, can still preach this extreme version of stakeholding without so much as a hint of irony. Radical, painful, Western style liberalisation and reform is meant to be in the air, but most Japanese industrialists would continue to insist that the primary purpose of business is not that of serving shareholders; it is the wider interests of company, community and nation that come first.

No wonder the Japanese stock market is in such bad shape. Even so, this way of thinking will not go away. There are very few lessons from history, but one of them

is that no model remains triumphant for ever. The gospel according to Mr Aikawa will live on and in another time it is going to be rediscovered and reinvented.

It may be that in the distant future, this is actually the corporate model that becomes supreme. Certainly it is hard to imagine the present situation, where corporate profits seem to be grabbing an ever greater share of total wealth, being tolerated for ever. Even with globalisation of national economies, there will eventually be a social and political backlash against the shareholder value purists. No rational human being given a clean sheet of paper would invent an organisation whose sole corporate purpose was to serve the interests of investors; it therefore seems curious that this is the one that the world over, now calls the shots.

The big British company most often cited as closest to the stakeholder ideal is Marks & Spencer. Yet even M&S doesn't really fit the Mitsubishi bill. The philosophy there is not to serve its employees, but to treat employees and customers well so as better to serve the interests of shareholders. This is not quite the same thing, though it may amount to a rather more reasonable compromise between capital and labour than what Mr Aikawa is on about.

A better parallel, though still an inexact one, is with Britain's remaining mutual organisations. With a mutual, the interests

of customers and shareholders are identical, since in most cases it is the customers who own the business. The unwritten contract in most of these organisations is that the benefits of mutual ownership are also shared with employees, usually in higher levels of employment than would otherwise be tolerated. So here we are getting closer to what Mr Aikawa is talking about, an organisation that is willing to go along with periods of uneconomic activity and investment, to tolerate a degree of inefficiency, if that is judged to be in the long-term interests of the company as a whole - employees as well as customers.

Mutual ownership does not translate well into businesses outside financial services. In any case, for this philosophy of business to work in a joint stock company, as it traditionally has done in Japan, requires a level of social cohesion and purpose, and a structure of ownership, which is altogether absent in the Anglo-Saxon world. But never say never. Look long, long into the future, and it may be that capitalism will have moved significantly in this direction, driven there as much by the cause of self preservation as any sense of altruism. The American way will not always rule. It looks unlikely now, but some variation of the Asian model may eventually end up triumphant, even here in the West. But not in our lifetimes.

Liffe members vote to reduce size of board

MEMBERS of Liffe, London's financial futures and options exchange, have voted overwhelmingly to restructure the management. At an extraordinary general meeting on Thursday evening, 88 per cent voted to reduce the size of the board from 24 to 18 or 19, and 99 per cent voted to install a full-time chairman, expected to be paid up to £500,000 a year. Members voted unanimously to cut all links between non-executive directors of the Liffe board and the exchange membership. Liffe management is trying to address a crisis of confidence at the exchange, which has been losing market share to the Deutsche Terminbörse, the German futures exchange.

£1.8m for L&G chief

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE of Legal & General, the insurance group, was awarded a package worth almost £1.8m in 1997. David Prosser's package included a £1.06m profit on the sale of share options, a salary of £400,000, a cash bonus of £180,000 and a deferred bonus of £80,000. Total board remuneration, excluding pension contributions and gains on share options, rose 18 per cent to £2.4m.

Perpetual down on denial

THE CHAIRMAN of Perpetual, the UK fund manager, denied his 19 per cent stake in the company was for sale. Martin Arbib said: "I have not been involved in any talks regarding any disposal of my personal shareholding in the company and the recent press speculation is unwelcome." Reports have suggested he was considering selling his stake to Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank. Perpetual shares finished the day down 217.5p at 4027.5p.

UniChem up 11pc

Alliance UniChem, the drugs distributor chaired by the former Chancellor Kenneth Clark, announced an 11 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £59.2m in 1997. The group is planning to expand in Europe after completing a £280m merger with Alliance Santé, the French group.

Proxy battle for Lonrho

A US money manager is seeking to overturn a recent vote taken by Lonrho, the mining group, to buy back shares and dismantle the group. Adrian Day, president of Global Strategic Management, said US shareholders were not sent proxies to vote.

Akzo to raise £584m

Akzo Nobel, the Dutch chemical group, said yesterday that it was asking shareholders to give it authority to raise an extra 2 billion guilders (£584m), creating speculation that it was about to mount a bid for Courtaulds, the British chemicals group, with which is already holding takeover talks. "We are creating more room for future possibilities, but nothing is planned," a spokesman said.

Shandwick keeps talking

SHANDWICK International, the public relations firm, said it was still in talks regarding a potential takeover of the group. The group said at its AGM that it has a strong new business book which should result in "satisfactory" progress for the second half of the year.

COMPANY RESULTS

| | Turnover £ | Pre-tax £ | EPS | Dividend |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Laurel Holdings (F) | 344.9m (27.2m) | 49.3m (16.33m) | 20.87p (4.28p) | (-) |
| Alliance Unichem (F) | 1.71m (1.49m) | 59.2m (53.5m) | 22.3p (20.2p) | 5.7p (6.8p) |
| Anglo Welsh Group (F) | 2.70m (1.41m) | 0.366m (0.082m) | 12.3p (18.18p) | 3.00p (-) |

(F) - final (P) - interim

WHO'S SUING WHO

JOHN WILLCOCK



COOPERS & Lybrand, the Big Six accountancy firm, is being sued by 14 financial institutions who are debenture holders in Resort Hotels, a company which crashed four years ago and which was audited by Coopers.

The plaintiffs, which include Axa Equity and Law Life Assurance, Commercial Union Life Assurance and Legal & General Assurance Society, are suing Coopers over a rights issue held two years before the company collapsed.

Robert Feld, head of Resort Hotels, was subsequently jailed for eight years for fraud and forgery. Earlier this month Feld had his sentence cut to six years by the Court of Appeal.

In his original trial Feld was found guilty of lying about the hotel chain's financial position, forging documents and boosting a profits forecast to back up

ARM float bonanza

By Peter Thal Larsen

ARM, the computer chip design company based in Cambridge, enjoyed a sparkling debut on the London Stock Exchange yesterday. Shares in the company, which were originally priced at 575p, ended the day at 820p, up 42 per cent, having briefly touched 1,000p.

The flotation means a bonanza for ARM's 300 employees, who between them own a 10 per cent stake in the company which is now worth at least £35m.

The success of the issue demonstrates the growing interest from European investors in technology companies. Although ARM opted for a dual listing on the London and Nasdaq exchanges, a substantial chunk of the shares were taken up by European investors.

The flotation was so popular that Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, the investment bank managing the flotation, twice increased the issue price. The original pricing range was set between 325p and 385p a share. The company has attracted

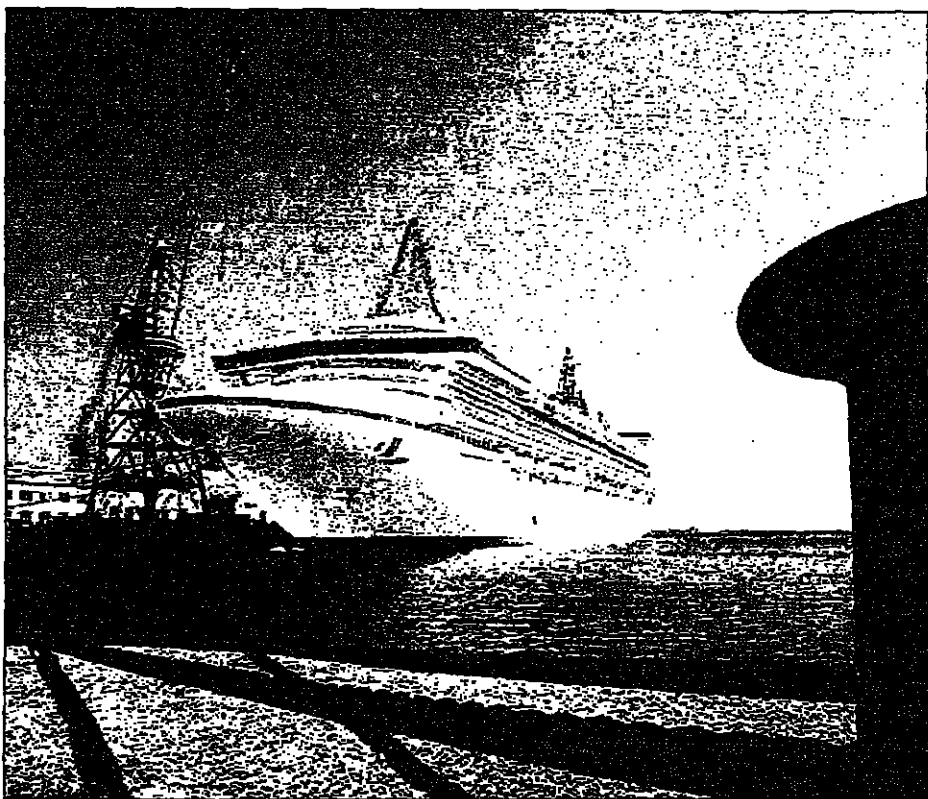
a sky-high share price rating. Last year, ARM made after-tax profits of around £3m on sales of £26.6m. Friday's closing price values the company at more than £375m.

"Nasdaq is a good high-tech market, but the majority of our employees are in the UK," said Robin Saxby, ARM's chief executive. "Wherever we have been we've had a very high level of interest."

ARM designs powerful, efficient processor chips, and then licenses the designs to chip manufacturers. Due to their low cost and efficient use of electricity, they are particularly popular with manufacturers of portable computers and mobile phones, which depend on battery power.

Chips designed by ARM are used in Psion's new Series 5 palm-top computer, and the company has also licensed its technology to Philips, the Dutch electronics giant, for use in its new "smart" mobile phone.

ARM was originally the chip design arm of Acorn, the British computer manufacturer. In 1990, it was spun off as a separate company.



Cruiser: All 2,600 berths in P&O's Grand Princess are booked until the end of the season

Bon voyage, baby boomers

THE BIGGEST cruise ship in the world, *Grand Princess*, is poised to make her maiden voyage for P&O with all 2,600 berths booked from now to the end of the season in October, writes Terry Macalister. The booming demand from US holidaymakers for the \$430m (£265m) vessel, which starts its first Mediterranean cruise schedule on May 16, underlines the buoyant nature of cruising worldwide. Latest statistics from P&O Cruises released yesterday show that in the first three months of this year forward bookings and yields were well ahead of the same period of 1997. P&O's share price rose 5p to 905p as brokers like HSBC Securities recommended P&O after it said booked revenues and yields for the rest of the 1998 were also advancing. The ship-owner said the average age of passengers on its Princess Cruises subsidiary has slipped below 50 for the first time. This suggests young American "baby boomers" are taking over from the traditional "blue rinse" brigade

Hambros closer to break-up

By Lea Paterson

THE BREAK-UP of Hambros, the City institution which has fallen from grace in the last few years, moved a step nearer yesterday when it announced the demerger of Hambros Countrywide, the estate agency and life assurance company.

Sir Chips Keswick, Hambros' chairman, said the board was in discussions with "certain interested parties who may be prepared to make a public offer for Hambros" following the Countrywide demerger, due to be completed in June.

The City believes Hambros is aiming at a sale price of more

than 300p a share, valuing the group at more than £530m, although analysts believe 280p to 300p may be more realistic.

Hambros said any offer was unlikely to include Hambros Insurance Services (HIS), HIS has appointed the financial advisers DLI Phoenix Securities to "assist in reviewing all options".

Hambros began the break-up process at the end of last year when it sold its core banking activities to Société Générale (SocGen), the French bank, for £300m. At the time, Sir Chips said the group decided to break itself up because the board "sadly came to the conclusion that we were not making any significant re-

turn to our shareholders".

Hambros has had a series of disappointing results, and its name was tarnished by its involvement in Andrew Regan's failed attempt to take over the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS).

After the Countrywide demerger, Hambros' assets will include the £231m cash surplus realised on the SocGen deal, a 44 per cent stake in Guinness Flight Hambros Asset Management (Guinness Flight), a 52 per cent stake in HIS and a diverse direct investment portfolio consisting of some 50 separate holdings. These include a 18 per cent stake in Corney & Barrow, the wine bar,

and a 2.5 per cent stake in Centaur, the publishing group.

Sources say it is "a possibility" the remaining assets, with the exception of HIS, will be sold as a single group, although speculation is mounting there will be a management buy-out at Guinness Flight.

Guinness Flight is a joint venture between Hambros and Guinness Mahon, the UK banking group that was recently bought by Investec of South Africa.

Hambros is currently understood to be talking to a "handful" of interested parties, and it is hoped the business details published yesterday will attract other potential bidders.

Listen to this man



The 1998 M'Cormick Lecture

Martin Sorrell is Group Chief Executive of WPP Group, which in 1997 generated a group annual turnover of £7.3bn. Under his leadership WPP has become the world's leading communications services group, employing 22,000 people, within 30 companies, in 90 countries.

In recent years the role of WPP Group has expanded from one of traditional holding company to value added parent company, adding distinct value to clients and even greater opportunities and rewards for its people. By adding value to the centre WPP believe they can demonstrate tangible results.

Martin Sorrell is also an enthusiastic supporter of The Association of MBAs and as a part of the M'Cormick Lecture series, will be giving a talk explaining how WPP is working to ensure that for them, the whole adds up to more than the sum of its parts. The talk will be held on April 20th, 1998.

Sponsored by
THE
INDEPENDENT
To order tickets or to find out more please call:
0171 837 3375



New issues in the spotlight as Footsie falls again

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

NEW ISSUES, plus two returns, made much of the running as the stock market ended a downbeat week.

ARM, a microchip group, was the star performer. But publisher LLP and fledgling oil group Desire made impressive debuts. LLP, the Lloyd's List group, closed at 347.5p in brisk trading. The shares were placed at 385p. Desire, seeking oil and gas around the Falkland Islands, moved from a 125p placing to 144p.

Shares of ARM were traded in their issued form. They soared briefly to 1,000p in heavy afternoon trading, settling at 830p. The issue price was fixed during the morning at 575p, up from early expectations of 325p to 385p.

Prestbury and Toad were the shares on the comeback trail. In busy trading Prestbury, Nick Leslau's new property vehicle, ended at 5.25p. The shares were suspended for the £10m takeover of a property portfolio. Toad, which

took over the Sexton car security group for £10m, traded at 29p.

There have been stirrings on the new issue front in recent weeks with Thomson, the holiday group which could be valued at around £1.5bn, and ComputaCenter, approaching £1bn, the largest recruits.

Others on the launch pad include AB Airlines, clothing retailers Matalan and New Look and Coca-Cola's European bottlers. Scientific publisher Taylor & Francis produces its pathfinder prospectus on Monday.

One of the surprising aspects of the strong bull run has been the relative shortage of new issues. It is ironic that more companies are coming to market at a time when equities have paused for breath. Many market men feel that Footsie, after its storming 20 per cent gain in just 10 weeks, is in desperate need of a period of consolidation.

Footsie fell 79.8 points, its biggest one day setback since the start of March. In this week's four trading days it has lost 183.3. Weak Far Eastern markets, resurfacing worries about the Asian crisis, and fears of higher domestic interest rates have done the damage.

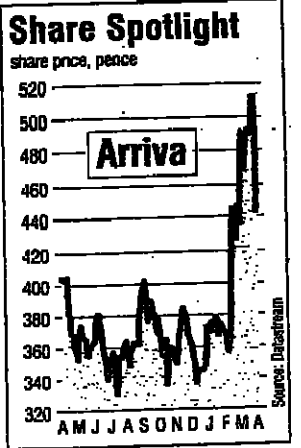
But selling has been light. Indeed trading volume, as benefits an Easter week, has been below normal levels.

Arriva, the transport group which used to be called Cowie, had a rough ride, down 34p at 441p. Its warning at Thursday's shareholders meeting that the financial division would struggle to match last year's performance is causing anxiety. Since the statement the shares have fallen 70.5p. Other leasing groups felt the impact. Lex Service reversed 18.5p to 557.5p and Avis Europe 3p to 223.5p.

Billiton, the minerals group, led the Footsie leader board, up 6p to 172p. Like Rio

Tinto it is a beneficiary of improving metal prices. Rio lost at early 20p gain to close at 858p, down 2p; Morgan Stanley put a 950p target on the shares.

PowerGen put on 19p to 774p following the industry regulator's probe into generators. National Power gained 9.5p to 552p. Energy, the electricity group, brightened 8p to



852p after the Government cleared the Texas Utilities offer.

The financial community came in for another roasting. Standard Chartered fell 64p to 940p and Northern Rock 18p to 634p. Halifax lost 21p to 850p. Schroders softened 74p to 2.83p.

Perpetual, the fund manager, tumbled 27.5p to 4,027.5p. Chairman Martyn Arbib said he was not involved in any talks to sell his stake and "I have no plans to reduce my personal holding in Perpetual substantially below its current level".

Hambros was little changed at 285p after it signalled the end was near. It is demerging its Hambro Countrywide estate agents arm and seeking bids for the rest of the business.

Thorn, the rental group on the receiving end of a bid (some say from the reclusive Barclay brothers), gained 14p to 205p with talk circulating

that a 225p offer was on its way.

Retailer Laura Ashley gained 2p to 35.5p on the Malaysian rescue. The shares were 219p in 1997. Next, which produced a surprise profit warning last month, fell 12p to 514p, lowest for 18 months. The shares touched 835p earlier this year. MFL Furniture's retreat continued, down 1.5p to 91.5p.

Granada held at 1,067p after Lehman Brothers signalled a 1,300p target price but EMI dipped 17p to 465.5p on the departure of Jim Field as chief of EMI Music.

Associated British Foods faltered at the close. At one time the shares were up 17.5p as ABN Amro decided this week's fall, following disappointing figures, had been overdone. But the perils of order-driven trading became apparent and the shares ended little changed as most trades were withdrawn towards the close. Final spread was an astonishing 552p to 610p.

TAKING STOCK

INTERNET Technology jumped 13.5p to 89.5p. In February the shares were 38.5p and they ended last week at 58.5p. The past week's strength follows bullish comments from SC Securities which expects this year's forecast £1.8m loss to translate into profits of £2.3m and then £7.1m. There have also been rumours Internet is planning to flex its corporate muscles - a bid for Easynet is one suggestion.

POLYPIPE, the building materials group, rose 2.5p to 160p after Charterhouse. They forecast strong profits growth. It expects £37.7m in the current year and then £42.5m. Last time the company produced £32.8m. Its shares are near their lowest for more than two years.

PUBLISHER Aspen fell 5p to 130p after Photobank, off 9.5p at 265p, dropped its takeover approach. Last month Photobank picked up 2.9 per cent of Aspen.

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|---------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Alcoholic Beverages | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Banks, Merchant | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|---------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Banks, Retail | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Breweries Pubs & Rest | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Building/Construction | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Chemicals | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Electronics | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Engineering | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|---------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Food Products | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Gas Distribution | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Health Care | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Household Goods | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Insurance | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Investment Trusts | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Leisure & Hotels | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|---------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Media | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|------------------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Oil Exploration & Production | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Other Financial | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Paper & Printing | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|-----------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Pharmaceuticals | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

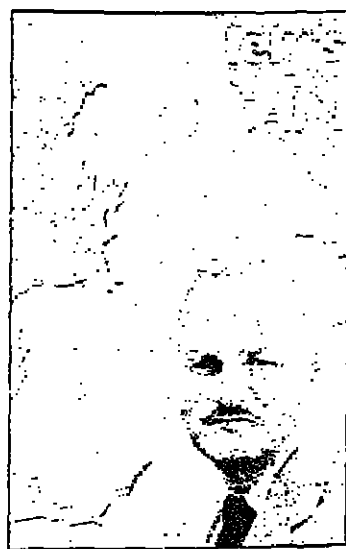
| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|----------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Property | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

| 12 week | High | Low | Stock | Price | Chg | Yld | P/E Code |
|------------------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Support Services | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |

23/UNIT TRUSTS

[illegible]

Valleys find future in old and new



The Rhondda:
Ian MacGregor's death revived bitter memories in South Wales this week, but the region is nevertheless being reshaped with a mix of the traditional and the modern

THE menu advertised Collier's Crisps and Miner's Muffins. Welcome to the Rhondda Heritage Park. This was once Lewis Merthyr Colliery in the heart of the South Wales coalfield. Now it is "a lively and evocative multi-media experience for all the family", complete with a shop full of red dragons and dolls in Welsh national dress. "We've made a pit stop at Rhondda," say its car stickers.

Into the restaurant with its cottagey furniture came a grizzled figure in a donkey jacket and coal-encrusted pit helmet. How authentic! A redundant miner - one of 10 employed by the park - to add a touch of verisimilitude to the tour.

But there was nothing sanitised about the reaction of these tour guides to the death this week of Sir Ian MacGregor, the man who shut down the British mining industry. "Bastard," said one former miner with the tiny blue scars of a lifetime's subterranean experience displayed for ever on his face. "Best thing he ever did, dying," said Squeaky Williams, the nightshift lampman up at Tower Colliery, the only pit in South Wales to escape the MacGregor axe when its men used their redundancy to stage a workers' buy-out. "And when Thatcher dies we'll close the pit and all take a day's holiday."

The bitterness runs deep against those who discharged the Thatcherite brief which promoted the interests of international capital above both the national interest and any sense

of compassion for the communities built around the nation's collieries.

It was not helped by the fact that the inhabitants of South Wales this week felt a flicker in the future which that international capitalism promised. Only the day after MacGregor's death, the Korean electronics giant LG, formerly Lucky Goldstar, was forced to issue hurried denials after one of its senior executives in Seoul said that, thanks to the Far East financial crisis, it was to postpone the development of its 1.7bn plant on a massive site just down the road in Newport.

It was splendid *schadenfreude* to the miners at Tower which is now paying high wages, making decent profits and recently paid its 300 employees a £500 dividend. "What kind of future is on offer from these foreign firms with their low pay and women's jobs," asked one of the visitors to Squeaky's lamproom. "They take home about £125 a week," he said, showing his own payslip for £459.

Such mythology is powerful, admitted David Rennie, a senior economist with the Welsh Development Agency. But it paints a faulty picture. "Inward investors [such as the Koreans or the 50 Japanese firms in the area] on average pay higher wages than local firms," he said. And although the decline of coal and steel has cost the region 100,000 jobs, a similar number have been created in new industries such as consumer electronics - half the United Kingdom's output of television sets and



Showing the way: Former miner Ivor England in his new job as a tour guide for the Rhondda Heritage Park Photograph: Rob Straccon

80 per cent of its microwave ovens are now made in Wales.

More typical is the story of Leighton Davies who, after 14 years in the coal industry, has switched to electronics. Happily wearing the LG uniform of fawn slacks and bomber jacket, the 42-year-old showed me round the company's 250-acre site where buildings are being thrown up at a rate which takes the breath away.

Mr Davies joined the National Coal Board as a storeman at 19 and was soon the youngest personnel manager ever appointed in the coalfield. But the bulk of his career was spent in counselling miners on the

board's redundancy programme. When he joined the industry it had more than 50,000 miners; it had only 6,000 when he was laid off too.

"I decided to look for something in the growth area - electronics," he said. In the past eight years, he has had the pleasure of seeing his workforce double where in mining he saw it decimated. "They are secure jobs, and a technician can earn £20,000."

Yet for those without skills the decline of coal has left a miserable legacy in the valleys. Many of the redundant miners whom Leighton counselled have done well, "but I know a lot in their thirties and

forties who haven't worked since". The option for them and their sons is jobs as security guards at as little as £2 an hour.

"Either that or the dole, as we still call it," said Glyndwr Roberts, a face-worker and chairman of the Tower Lodge National Union of Mineworkers, over a pint in the Penywaun Club & Institute. The place must have looked welcoming in the old days when it was full, but now it looked bleak in its spartan Formica and leatherette, empty but for a handful of older drinkers. "When they closed the mines they took all the hope out of the young people - anti-social be-

haviour, crime and drugs is the result. A gap has opened between those out of work and those in. Many people are afraid to go out at night."

Clean stone, unpolluted air and inactive chimneys are but small compensation for those like him who feel cheated of their industry. Everywhere lingers the sense that many of the mines were closed unnecessarily. "They shut better pits than this one," said Squeaky, up at Tower.

Mr Davies agrees. "It took me a long time to realise that their strategy was to close everything," he said. "At first I assumed that they were closing the loss-makers and that the in-

dustry would be left with a dozen or so lucrative pits. After all my pit had just embarked on a major capital investment costing £30m. MacGregor himself came to unveil the plaque. The colliery was making money right up until the day they closed it."

But a political rather than an industrial decision had been taken. The coal industry became entangled with ideology, smashing the unions, privatisation, freeing up international trade and capital flows were the priorities of the Thatcher government. "The colliery review procedure," said Leighton, "was nothing more than a sham."

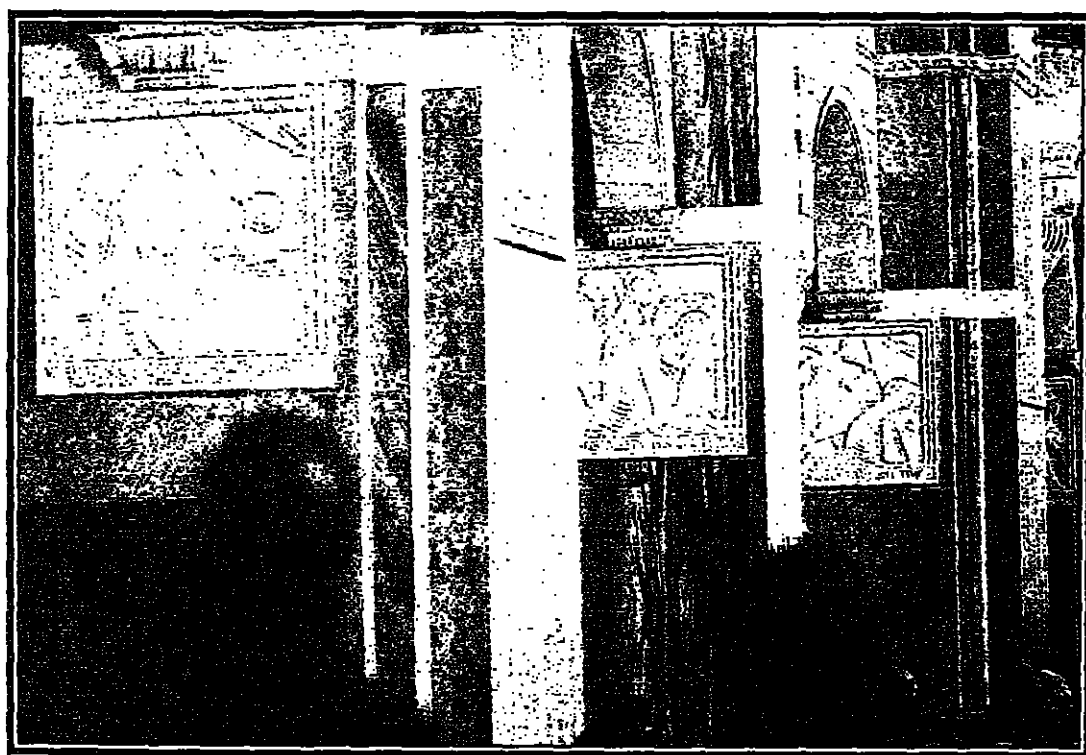
There is, in all this, something of a nostalgia for the good old days. One of the Heritage Park's guides, Ivor England - a miner like his grandfather, father, uncles, brothers and cousins - waxes during the historical part of his tour about the "empire on which the sun never set, so long as coal was extracted from the Rhondda". History as romantic heritage is on offer in the European Union-funded park along with the replica Davy lamps in shining brass.

But there is nothing nostalgic about the £20m plan by Tower to sink a new shaft at Margam to mine coking coal for the nearby Port Talbot steelworks. A government-sponsored report this week by the Cardiff Business School says that coal makes a significant contribution to the local economy and suggests a new government framework to support the industry. Ministers have responded with favourable noises.

On Sundays at Tower Colliery the miners hold underground open days. Many of the visitors are former miners. "They say the difference in technology is unbelievable," Squeaky told me. "Go through to the control room and you can see it all on the monitors." In the control room the men on duty spoke proudly of how in the past there would be a man underground by every conveyor belt. "Now it's all done by computer and the men underground are all engaged in more productive work," said the controller. "Look at this new cutter" - it cost £1.5m. "We didn't have that under British Coal."

"I looked at the monitors. At the bottom of each was the word Goldstar. The Koreans were here too. Welcome to this murky world of the future."

TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



SEX AND GOD

Eric Gill slept with his daughters and sisters.
Now victims of abuse want his breathtaking
carvings removed from Westminster Cathedral.
Cole Moreton on a moral dilemma

Plus

- The 10 coolest things about Britain
- Saturday Night Fever is back - this time on stage
- Part two of the ultimate guide to seafood

the university for industry

Monday 20 April 1998

Business Design Centre, London N1

A one day national conference for policy makers in higher and further education to look at the implementation of the Government's proposals on the creation of a University for Industry. It will examine the role that further and higher education institutions can play by working together and with business at a local, regional and national level increasing the skills and knowledge of the workforce, as well as supporting research and development in industry and commerce.

Speakers Include:

Dr Kim Howells MP,
Parliamentary Under Secretary, DFEE

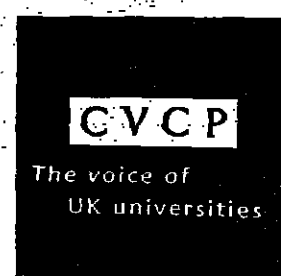
Rosie Boycott,
Editor, *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*

David Brown,
Chairman, Motorola Ltd and Chair,
UPI Design and Implementation Advisory Group

Josh Hillman,
Institute for Public Policy Research

Simon Sperryn,
Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Diana Warwick,
Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals



Higher
Education
Conferences

THE
INDEPENDENT



DELEGATE FEES

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Full Rate | £240.00 + VAT Total £288.00 |
| Reduced Rate | £195.00 + VAT Total £234.00 |
| Supported Rate | £140.00 + VAT Total £168.00 |

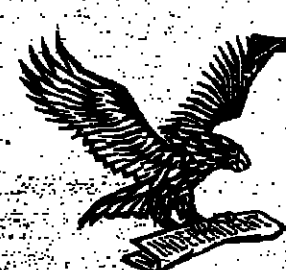
For more information, please contact

Neil Stewart Associates

11 Dartmouth Street
London SW1H 9BL

tel 0171-222 1280
fax 0171-222 1278

مكتبة الأمل



TIME OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 18 April 1998



PICTURE OF THE WEEK Marathon man: dawn preparations for next week's race in London, by Jim Loring. To order a 12x9in print (price £15) call 0171-293 2534

Week in, week out

If you're a single pig or an elephant who likes the odd lolly, the last seven days have been great. But then there's always good news for animals, writes Andrew R Marshall

It was the best of times, the worst of times. For human beings, this week was the usual dreadful concatenation of tragic, bloody and violent awfulness, at least as far as the international news agencies were concerned.

The agencies, serious and professional though they are, sometimes seem to have a profoundly black view of the world. In common with most journalists, they focus on bad news.

They do try to find something a little lighter each day; but lighter doesn't always mean funny. Sometimes it means, frankly, pretty grim, because journalists have a macabre sense of humour. They love what are called in the trade "Scandinavian Brights," shocking and unpleasant stories with a twist.

A good example ran on Reuters last week. "A German camper died from injuries received when a camp-site toilet exploded as he tried to light a cigarette, blasting him through a closed window," it reported, with a straight face.

But turn to the wonderful world of animals, and all is different. When furry friends figure, the accent seems to be on good news. Every day there is a snippet of good tidings from the animal kingdom.

This week, we had anti-depressants for dogs to ease the pain of separation from their owners. But that wasn't all. A heat-wave has hit Israel, but the animals in the Biblical Zoo won't suffer. The bears and elephants get fruit-flavoured ice treats. "We don't want to see them hot and bored. If they start pacing back and forth, exhibiting bored behaviour, it means they're unhappy and might start acting strangely," said Dr Gabriel Eshkar, a veterinarian and deputy zoo director.

Malaysia is also well-served. The inhabitants of the zoo will be all right, however, because their drinking water comes from a special well. Meanwhile some 600,000 residents of Kuala Lumpur have suffered severe water rationing for weeks. Sarajevo Zoo has had a lean time. It

was forced to close in 1992 when the war put it on the front lines. At the moment, the only resident is a rather sad owl, which was donated by a taxi driver after it crashed into his cab. None of the other animals survived the war. The company that runs the zoo has written to all foreign

embassies in Bosnia asking for help to restock it.

Meanwhile, in Utah, a pig that wandered into heavy traffic and caused an almighty accident ended up in the lap of luxury. It was taken home by Pauline Coy, who found it injured and wandering along

Interstate 15. She gave it a bed in her chicken coop. "It took everything I had to hoist him up and get him in my truck," she said, having tucked it up in a heated blanket.

Another pig, Rudy, who has three eyes and two snouts, also had some good news. Instead of facing the (pork) chop or life in a freak show, he has been saved by Pigs Without Partners, a Los Angeles-based animal rescue group. They changed his name to Ditto, for reasons best known to themselves. "I think Ditto is going to have a wonderful life - much better than in the circus," Rocky More, the organisation's executive director, said.

A brighter future is also in store for birds in California. Electric fences around prisons have saved \$40m a year in guard salaries, but they aren't so great for birds which fly into them. Among their victims have been 145 burrowing owls, 111 loggerhead shrikes, and 10 red-tailed hawks - all endangered species. Now the authorities have put up nets at half the state's pris-

ons, at a cost of \$3.4m, which should cut the number of electrocuted birds by 90 per cent.

Good news, too, for Brazilian bulls. *Farra do boi*, or ox-baiting, a traditional Brazilian Easter sport, has been made a crime except in certain special areas, which is good news for the oxes. So seriously do the police take this law that they fired rubber bullets at a group of people who tried to have a go in the south of the country.

So why all the good news? And why so little good news about people?

Perhaps the proliferation of sweet stories about animals reflects a sad truth about the world: that most people are horrible to each other, most of the time. But it is more likely that it represents a sad truth about journalists, not about the world: these hard-bitten types, with their cynicism about fellow human beings, are reduced to sniffing bundles of sentimentality by little (or big) furry animals. It warms your heart, doesn't it?

INSIDE

TRAVEL

On the beaten rail track across the US
Mellow daze in Laos

GARDENING

SPORT

Racing: Walter Swinburn looks to the future
Rugby Union: showdown at Vicarage Road
Football: Tottenham in crisis



If you're saving up
to go on a long journey,
our bonus will
help you go further.

The new Halifax Monthly Saver account

7.5%

At the Halifax, we've just launched a new Monthly Saver account that makes saving even more rewarding.

You can save a fixed amount between £5 and £250 each month which will earn an attractive 7.5%* each year, made up of a healthy interest rate of 5% and an annual bonus of 2.5%. Because we know you're only human, you do have the flexibility to miss one payment and make one withdrawal a year and still get your bonus.

And, if you're one of the lucky 25 winners in our Double Your Money competition, we'll double the amount you've invested over the first year. For more details just call into your local branch or phone us free on 0800 10 11 10 for an information pack.

Whether you want a few days in France or a few weeks in Florida, our new Monthly Saver account will help you get there.

HALIFAX
Get a little extra help.
www.halifax.co.uk

*The standard interest rate (5%) and bonus (2.5%) are variable. The figures quoted are gross interest and bonus only (net interest and bonus will be paid gross (this means without the deduction of interest) if you are registered with us as a non-tax payer. Halifax Monthly Saver is not available as a child or charity account, nor can you use it as a corporate partnership or other kind of business account. Halifax Monthly Saver account holders must pay a regular monthly amount into their account by standing order and must be 18 or over when opening a Halifax Monthly Saver account. Any deposit made into a Halifax Monthly Saver account at any branch of Halifax plc between 15th March and 30th April 1998 can enter the competition. Competition closes 30th May 1998. Full rules and entry form available on request from any Halifax branch. Full explanation and a copy of the account conditions are available from Halifax plc. Registered office: Trinity Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 2RN. Registered in England No. 2220700.



Screening gems on LA's main street

New York's Broadway is thrilling, but long. Its Los Angeles namesake is shorter and much more intense. Simon Calder walks the street.

"Need breakfast? Try our special," invites the canteen at the Criminal Courts Building (open 7am to 3.30pm, if you're interested). A heeded, ageing panhandler, with an expression so distant that it could have been still gazing at Saigon, circa 1970, misread my interest in the building: "If you're going to court, you can get in this way," he pointed.

He was the first of many beggars on Broadway to make a dollar that day, but this represents a very reasonable price for a street that, however unwittingly, puts on a rollicking show for visitors.

You could cover the ground in 40 minutes. The significant stretch of constricted artery that is California's version of Broadway is barely a couple of miles long – yet it cuts clean through a startling cross-section of Los Angeles.

That's Los Angeles proper, not to be confused with any of its self-indulgent suburbs. The whole LA megalopolis looks like an over-ripe Californian peach that has been splatted on a freeway. Downtown is the knarled old stone at the core – and Broadway is an especially deep vein.

You pick up the trail in the vicinity of the original Pueblo de Los Angeles, the Spanish settlement that has been spruced up as El Pueblo Historic Park for the benefit of the few tourists who get this far from a beach. Across the park, the handsome desolation of Union Station reminds you this is a fickle city whose romance for the train ended years ago when it shacked up with the motor car. Appropriately, you bridge Highway 101 at the start of the walk south.

If every corner of California's biggest city looks familiar, that's probably because it's been used as a backdrop for some movie or other. One non-fictional exception stands a block away on Spring Street, a hulky cuboid of a building: the Federal Courthouse, where OJ Simpson was tried.

A more uplifting sight is the adjacent about-to-ascend sight of spaceship City Hall, a classic 1928 skyscraper straight out of Gotham, topped with a pyramid. Having cocked a suitably flamboyant snook at New York, for three decades no other building in LA was allowed to exceed 13 storeys.

So far, so opulent. Someone has even thought to add a piece of street sculpture to divert the pedestrian. But as you descend, the middle distance looks a little less rosy. The first real sight on Broadway proper, like the last, is home to a newspaper. As a piece of architecture, the Los Angeles Times building is as undistinguished as, say, Canary Wharf. But the car park is enlivened with a relief showing the history of LA since 1492 (leaving out the troublesome riots 500 years later). A series of quotations adds journalistic gravitas to the proceedings. "Los Angeles is destined to become the most important city in this country, if not the world," said Henry E Huntington in 1920.

New York, Tokyo and London might have something to say about that. If each of these cities had to compete on the basis of a single building, rather than in millions of people, they would be hard-pressed to beat the Bradbury Building, shortly to appear on your left. Despite being rooted firmly in the 19th century, the Bradbury has the distinction of making it into the 21st century as a location for the film *Blade Runner*.

Victorian brickwork facing out on Broadway conceals a conspiratorially indulgent structure, with terracotta and wrought-iron combining to frame a collusion of spaces. The conspiracy, if the account of the architect George Wyman is to

be believed, was between him and his dead brother, who inspired the design from beyond the grave with the help of a Ouija board.

And so to McDonald's – not a place you would automatically equate with an inspirational elevenses. But on the east side between Third and Fourth stands a Mayan branch of the burger chain, with extra Mis-

If every corner of LA looks familiar, that's because it's been used as a backdrop for a movie

sion dressing. Alongside the Mesoamerican imagery is a framed notice promising *Mi Casa es Su Casa* – my house is your house – reflecting that you are moving into thoroughly Hispanic territory. More Mexican meals can be scavenged at the stalls within the adjacent Grand Central public market, the closest you'll get to Latin life this side of the Rio Grande.

A few more blocks of Spanish-speaking stores and panhandlers intervene before the 1930s motifs on the sidewalk outside Clifton's cafeteria (also notable for its extensive list of breakfast options). A

series of elaborate mosaics shows scenes from the activities of Los Angeles, culminating in a film cameraman.

"Broadway" means theatre in both New York and Los Angeles. But while both have a dozen or so straggling along their respective versions of the road, the LA collection is devoted to screen, not stage. These are also much more ornate, with painstaking decoration everywhere. The mightiest of them all is the Los Angeles Theatre, on the western shore between Sixth and Seventh. Its implausibly elaborate columns look as though they were designed by a neo-classicist on tequila. It opened in 1931, with the premiere of Chaplin's *City Lights*.

An even more extravagant theatre, the Mayan, stands a block west of Broadway at 11th and Hill Street. Pre-Columbian imagery has been taken to absurdity and beyond, with fierce terracotta warriors out-facing passers-by. The whole concoction looks more manic yet when caught in a flash of sun reflecting from one of the nearby foil-wrapped skyscrapers.

Your mission ends at a real Mission mish-mash. The architect of Hearst Castle, Julia Morgan, translated Hispanic designs to 1111 Broadway and amplified it with Art Deco to create the Herald Examiner building. As a treat for the eyes, this

In the frame: LA's Broadway
Photograph: Geraint Lewis

long, low, palace-of-print looks superb: as a place to run a newspaper it looks seriously challenged, which is perhaps why the *Herald Examiner* has not done as well as the *LA Times*. South from here, the inner city really takes a grip. Quentin Crisp described Los Angeles as "New York lying down", but here it resembles Mogadishu taking a nap. Best cross the road and head back north. There's a lot more Broadway, backdrops and beggars, on the other side.

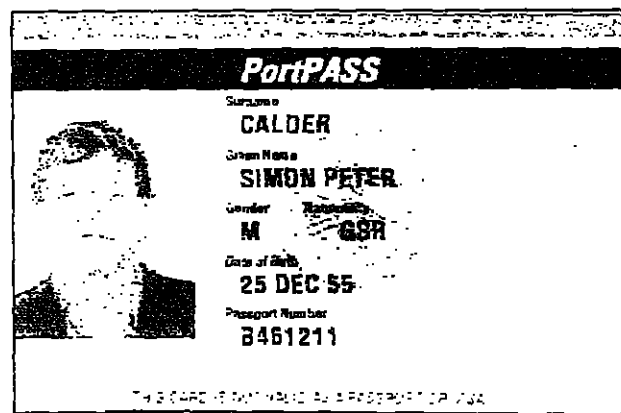
Simon Calder travelled to Los Angeles from Heathrow, and returned from LA to Luton, using a selection of somewhat dodgy tickets that entailed making stops in Chicago, Kansas City, Phoenix and Amsterdam. The total cost was around £420.

You can reach the city more easily and cheaply non-stop from Heathrow on Air New Zealand, American Airlines, British Airways, United Airlines and Virgin Atlantic (which also operates on behalf of Continental Airlines). Booking through a discount travel agency, you could pay as little as £350 return.

"LA Access", by Richard Saul Wurman (distributed in the UK by HarperCollins, £12.99) is an excellent guide to Broadway and the rest of the city.

Within 30 minutes of arriving at Newark airport, I was being fingerprinted by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service – not because I'm a particularly undesirable alien, but because I was renewing my Inpass. Anyone who has queued for hours in the queue for Immigration at New York should try to get hold of one of these wondrous devices, which gets you into America with just a wave of the hand.

I have written previously about this precious piece of plastic, but the steady stream of enquiries about it since then makes it worth restating the advice. Inpass is the acronym for Immigration and Naturalization Service Passenger Accelerated Service System. Using a special card, you can speed through US Immigration in less time than it takes to recite the name of the system.



The card is intended for "low-risk, frequent" travellers to the US. You can apply for it – and use it – only in five international airports: New York JFK and Newark, Los Angeles, Miami and Toronto. If you feel you qualify, follow the signs to the enrolment centre in the airport terminal. Here, an immi-

gration official performs a perfunctory interview about how often you visit the US; he or she can probably tell whether you are being extravagant with the truth just by looking at your passport. If there are no previous US Immigration stamps, you'd better have a good story ready.

You then complete an application rather like the Visa Waiver form (which asks about previous involvement in drugs and Nazi war crimes), have your fingerprints taken and place your right hand in a special machine that measures its geometry – a highly individual characteristic. Then you have a supremely unflattering picture taken (you've just spent eight hours on a plane with inferior in-flight entertainment, for goodness' sake).

The card is free, and looking silly is a small price to pay for avoiding immigration queues in the coming year.

"We took your advice and booked the £199 trip to South Korea," write Peter Davies and Alison Parker on a jolly postcard from Seoul. They are referring to the silliest offer the year so far: I wrote on 7 March that

British Airways was unloading seats to the Korean capital for £199, because of the Asian economic slump. BA has now abandoned the route altogether, but not before the pair had taken advantage of the Far East-for-less-than-tuppence-a-mile deal.

"With the exchange rate so strong we have found everything to be roughly half the price of the UK, although the tradespeople here seem to think we're loaded; haggling has become a very quickly learned skill. Saying 'We are not Japanese' and having a 1.2-inch height advantage increases our bargaining position substantially.

"Nevertheless, it's a fascinating place and somewhere we would not have visited without the giveaway fare. We eagerly await the next obscure bargain." So do I.

Neither obscure, nor a bargain. That's Peter May's e-mailed response to an item in last week's *Check In* column.

"I don't think Boots £135 for family insurance for one month is a good deal. Other companies are offering 12 month multiple-trip family insurance for the same price or less. *The Independent* usually points out the good deals; this doesn't seem like one."

Favourable or otherwise, Mr May's comments – like those of every reader – are appreciated.

GREEN CHANNEL

America may have invented the national park, but here in Britain we caught on eventually. If you were one of the tens of thousands of people who visited one of the national parks in England and Wales during the Easter break, the chances are you got there by car. Fewer than one in five of the 76m people who visit national parks every year, get there by any other means of transport.

The consequence? Severe traffic congestion and pollution in some of the most environmentally sensitive and tranquil areas of Britain, and a growing need for our green and pleasant land to be Larmacadamed-over in order to create car parks to deal with the influx. Not surprisingly, the Council for National Parks is eager to encourage people to travel by public transport.

The Peak District National Park, which receives 2.2m day visits per year – more than any national park in the world except Mount Fuji in Japan – is particularly at pains to improve things. Its integrated transport strategy, launched by Glenda Jackson this month, proposes long-term plans such as the reintroduction of the Buxton-Madlock railway and traffic restraints on cross-Pennine

routes. In the short term, the Park Authority is trying hard to entice us on to public transport for future visits. Exchange your parking receipt at an information centre, and you get a travel pack with £5-worth of discount tickets for public transport plus travel and walking information.

The authority has also got together with the British Mountaineering Council to introduce a special bus that will allow climbers to leave their cars at home. Climbers (and other members of the public) can get on the bus after work on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings in Sheffield and climb or walk at the popular areas of Burbage Bridge and Stanage Edge until the sun goes down, when the bus returns. The bus will also run during the day on Sunday.

For information on public transport facilities to national parks throughout the country, contact the Council for National Parks on 0171-924 4077. For details on travelling to and in the Peak District: Peak District National Park 01629 816200.

Sue Wheeler

RED CHANNEL

A compendium of hazards facing today's traveller. This week: hidden taxes

Since the start of the year, advertisements for flights have been obliged to include payable taxes. On 1 January, the Advertising Standards Authority brought in a new rule to this effect, but its enforcement has been patchy. A series of calls to advertisers in a range of publications – notably free magazines in the London area – reveals that many small travel agencies are failing to comply.

The response of three agencies when

pressed about why they don't include taxes in advertising suggests that they are aware of the new rule:

"Some people include us and some people don't. It's not the law."

"This is a mistake – next week it will be amended."

"As far as I'm concerned these taxes are inclusive of taxes. It's up to individual consultants to charge whatever they like." (This was the manager of an agency advertising "New York £129 return" – a figure which did not include £53 in tax.)

ICELAND & GREENLAND
Glaciers - Geysers - Whales - Volcanoes
All the excitement and beauty of the Arctic & Sub-Arctic in one place. Book now for the best prices.
01753 218801
www.iceandgreenland.co.uk
ARCTIC EXPERIENCE
ARCTIC - ARCTIC - ARCTIC

America by Rail
From coast to coast, vibrant cities linked by magnificent scenery.
Highlights include New York, Chicago, Denver, Grand Canyon, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Join one of our imaginative tours for the best way to see this vast and diverse country. **Tour Price from £845 including all flights, airport transfers, hotel accommodation & all train travel.** Places still available for September & October departures. Call now for your full colour brochure. Explorers Tours ATOL/ABTA 13883
Call for a brochure 01753 681999

ملا من الامم



Rock and rail

Orient Express it isn't cheap it ain't. But hell, you sure do see America from the railroad.
By Tamsin Murray-Leach

If you were offered a choice between crossing the United States by plane (a journey that takes six hours) or spending three days cooped up in a railway carriage, which would you choose? The sane traveller, the expedient traveller, the money-conscious traveller would opt for the flight, but the shortsighted romantic would pack camera and notepad and head for the railway station lickity-split, barely pausing to wonder why they were paying over twice as much for their one-way train ticket as they would to fly.

So it was that I found myself on a train headed west out of New York, in the company of assorted armchair adventurers and Fearful Flyers, unprepared for three days of air conditioning. "Climate Control: simply turn the knob to the temperature you desire, and technology will do the rest." Personally I'd rather windows that open than technology, but three days later and with sinuses barely intact, Amtrak still seemed a far more civilised option than flying.

Unlike the sterilised environment of an aeroplane, travelling by train offers so many unique moments, each making the long journey worthwhile: waking up as the train rattled across the wide plains of Kansas at sunrise, faint light of dawn licking the panoramic window; reading quietly at night to the lulling hum of metal wheels, while our speed swept clouds of snow across the black shadows of winter trees; crossing the Colorado Rockies over towering mountain passes and through the red gorges of the Colorado River - soaring bald eagles and straggling elk the only signs of life.

Much of North America was built on the railroad, yet so few US citizens take the train these days that the Clinton administration is considering eliminating Amtrak's already reduced operating subsidies. Once Western railroad companies posted advertisements back East offering packages of prairie land to prospective passengers: today there are no freebies, just a rather hefty demand on your cheque book.

New York to San Francisco or LA is three days straight on a train, with a short stopover in Chicago's business district - you'll have time to glimpse a few skyscrapers and that's it. If economy is your priority, catch a plane or brave the bus. Those taking the train should invest in a sleeper. The first morning on board, after waking from a sound sleep to snowflakes falling on the quiet, bleak farmlands of Ohio, I breakfasted in the dining car beside a large man with a heavy Brooklyn accent. He was a tough guy who looked as if he had survived far more in life than a night in an uncomfortable chair.

"I've always wanted to take the friggin' train to LA," he groaned, his bleary eyes struggling to stay open. "But unless I get a sleeper for tonight, I really don't think I'm gonna make it - yo, I'm serious."

Sleepers do not come cheap, and upon peeping into your allotted cupboard for the first time you may wonder where the dollars have gone. Family groups, taller couples or those with a low space-invasion threshold would be wise to take a family or deluxe cabin, which include a mini-bathroom, couch and just about enough room to swing a cat.

Yet it's the things that wouldn't seem like indulgences at home which one comes to appreciate after a few hours on a train. In the sleeping cars the toilets are always clean and there's never a queue; one can take a shower, weak by American standards but on a par with British plumbing; and, perhaps most importantly, you can shut the door on all other passengers, thus avoiding crying babies, hissing Walkmans and

other people's conversations. Dave, my sleeping car attendant, took immaculate care of his charges, regardless of whether we boarded in the middle of the night, came complete with oversized, overweight baggage, had a hundred questions about the route or merely wished to be left in peace. Orange juice and a newspaper were supplied on waking, coffee was available all day and chocolates miraculously appeared in the sleeper after dinner.

Amtrak has concentrated in recent years on improving its service standards, and the cheerful friendliness of all its on-

more evident than in the dining car. An illusion of first-class dining is created by allowing sleeper passengers to reserve a time slot for dinner, while the commoners down in coach must queue up for a space, but the food - served on plastic plates due to financial cutbacks - is just as mediocre for everyone. Entrées such as steak and catfish look promisingly elegant on the menu, but fail to live up to expectations, rating slightly below standard airplane fare. Amtrak claims that its chefs were trained at the Culinary Institute of America, but in what, exactly?

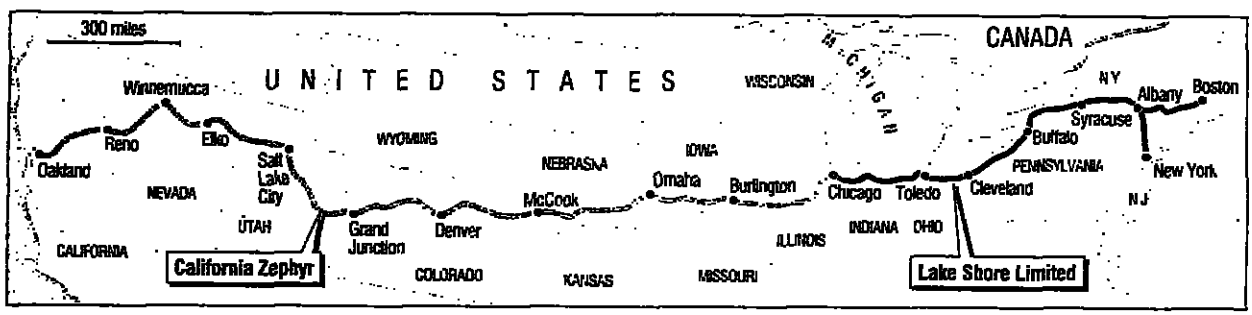
As Amtrak operates the traditional railcar policy of filling all four seats at a table, thus a couple or lone traveller will always be seated with strangers, an occasionally alarming but never uninteresting experience. My many dining companions included a pair of actors and their child, moving to Los Angeles for a three-month work contract; an itinerant worker from the Midwest, recently divorced and heading West for the promise of a warehouse job and a space on his buddy's couch; and three high school graduates with bad punk haircuts from Smalltown Pennsylvania, determined on en-

The US on track: New York to San Francisco or LA is three days straight in a train
Photographs: Corbis

Indeed, Americans might all at first look alike in the disguise of comfortable clothes, but a wide sample of the United States can be found on the train. A political lobbyist from Washington confided that he took the train annually not only to get in three days of undisturbed work, but to "meet America", declaring that Washington and New York provided little insight into the true constituent body. Dinner does not afford the only occasion for discussion, as three days of confinement tends to prompt most travellers into enthusiastic conversation at the slightest provocation. Stories are swapped on the platform at each stop, and it's easy to strike up discourse in the lounge car, with its huge floor-to-ceiling windows, magazine racks, swivelling easy chairs and bar.

Dave the sleeping car attendant sighed, however, that it wasn't quite like the old days when the lounge was the scene of rowdy drinking parties, thick smoke and occasional nudity. Nowadays things are a little more subdued, with a Happy Hour and "get together" before dinner, followed by a nightly movie screening. Community spirit is encouraged by the Chief of On-Board Services and the attendants; at one point we were invited over the intercom to stick our heads out of our cabins and greet our neighbours.

Yet despite the intriguing company, it must be admitted that the opportunity for carefree solitude was the trip's real selling point. Despite the lack of air (take nasal spray), my little standard sleeper was not the cramped closet it first appeared to be - as it turned out, it was little short of a surrogate womb. With food, accommodation and the whole point of the day - travel - taken care of by others, I was free to retreat to my cabin, close the door and sit quietly as America rushed on by.



Getting there
Bookings to parts of the US, notably Florida, are extremely heavy, but to other destinations on the East Coast you should be able to find seats at £250 return, or £350 to the West Coast.

Getting across
If you can travel by 21 May, Thomas Cook Flights Direct (0990 101520) has a special deal giving reduced-rate Amtrak tickets for two or three passengers travelling together. Companies such as Explorers Tours (01753 681999) offer a range of organised rail tours of the US.

The Greyhound Bus Company is still rolling across America. Four days of unlimited travel (enough to take you from coast to coast) costs £75, while a 30-day pass is £230. These must be bought in advance from Greyhound International (01342 31717).

board staff reflects the success of this policy. Having worked the trains for almost 20 years, Dave's knowledge of the railroads and of local history was inexhaustible, as he happily pointed out nuclear waste dumps on the Plains, wildlife in the Rockies and whorehouses in Nevada.

Just bear in mind that despite the frills, Amtrak is still a working train service rather than an Orient Express-style recreation of bygone extravagance. Nowhere is this

However, there's still something exciting about sitting down to dine in a moving railway carriage, a feeling that far surpasses buying wilted burgers-to-go from the hatch on British trains. After dark it feels cosy and intimate, while there's nothing quite like an early breakfast of hearty American pancakes and maple syrup as the sun streams through the wall-to-wall windows.

Mealtimes also provide the best opportunity to mingle with other passengers.

lightening adventure. Dinner conversation is always illuminating for the casual observer of American culture: I remained quiet as a rather conservative graduate law student and a middle-aged travelling mail-to-mail "Glamour Shots" photographer had an earnest conversation about the ills of San Francisco, basing their dislike of the city on the hypothetical problem of having to explain to a small child why two grown men would walk down the street holding hands.

The promised land, for a fistful of dollars

Tony Marshall visits New Canaan, New England, where new and old money retreats to a claphoard paradise

It was Ernest Hemingway who said the rich were the same as you or me, they just had more money. And in New Canaan, Connecticut, said to be the richest town in America, it is easy to believe he was right.

This is a squeaky-clean sort of a place, full of white-painted claphoard buildings straight out of a Downton Abbey, or its American equivalent. There is a church on almost every street - the First Presbyterian, the Congregational, Episcopalian, the United Methodists. And then there is Silver Hill, the poshest centre for the treatment of drunks and addicts in America, where stars of stage

and screen come to dry out and get straight - a process that *Porkinoy's Complaints* author Philip Roth underwent and described in his last-but-one novel *Sabbath's Theater*.

Hemingway is unlikely to have taken the cure, but he knew New Canaan through his lifelong editor and agent, Maxwell Perkins, who had a house up the road.

New Canaan certainly has a rich and respectable front. Canaan was the Old Testament name for the Israelites' Promised Land and it has, for many of its residents, achieved that heavenly status. The town centre is spotless, as if someone

had gone round twice a day with a giant vacuum cleaner. It is tiny - only a block square - set on the edge of Oenoke Ridge, which was once the hunting ground of the Iroquois tribe of native Americans.

Roads lead off from the corners of the block to Norwalk, Wilton and Stamford, and enclose what is now the haunt of Wall Street brokers, lawyers, bankers and film stars such as Meryl Streep, Christopher Reeve and Robert Redford. And Andre Previn has a place, Caramor - a vast estate with a Mexican-style hacienda which houses a concert hall.

There is the tiny New Canaan bank building, a furniture store, two petrol stations, a small cinema, the Starbucks coffee house, fire station, cake shop, sports outfitters, two clothing stores, the CVS drugstore, the Bread Basket, Uncle's Deli, flower shop, real estate broker's, a Chinese take-away, the Tequila Mockingbird Mexican bar and restaurant, a bike shop, and a bar called Cherry Street East - on Cherry Street.

It is the heart of America's equivalent of the Surrey stockbroker belt, the difference being that it is densely forested with oaks, plane trees and pines, so that the vast houses are mostly hidden from the roads - and there is (perhaps surprisingly, for car-crazed America) a 25mph speed limit.

It is also incredibly pretty. And if there were a competition for the quietest town in North America, New Canaan would be in the running. You can see why it is such a haven for the big players from Hollywood or Madison Avenue or Wall Street. And there is plenty of old money, with residents such as members of the Kennedy clan hiding out in their red-brick mansions. Which is why you won't find houses advertised for less than £1m.

Yet many of the people here don't consider themselves rich - because the Joneses next door have a £10m residence.

The style of many of these dwellings is unpretentious - one- or two-storey wooden buildings like the old New England farmhouses they may once have been (one or two still have red barns attached). Some of the newer ones are mock Louisiana plantation houses, copies of Dutch-style houses in Cape Cod, or even what look bizarrely like French chateaux.

You can have one built to your specifications from an architect's catalogue - an off-the-peg *antebellum* mansion with modern plumbing - for the same price as an old claphoard farmhouse. But don't expect change from £2m.

The early-morning trains are crammed with commuters, who start work at 7.30am, in well-cut suits and clean shirts reading the *New York Times*. The last direct train back is at 7.03pm and it is a different story. Plastic tumblers of ice line the carriage doorways and empty cans of Coors beer roll around on the floor. One dishevelled suit, probably back from a posting to a bank in London, was yelling over and over again with a good, phoney English accent, "You're obviously one of us." Everyone fell about laughing at the irony.

New Canaan is the end of the line, the terminus where everyone who is very rich, very lucky or very screwed up must wake and queue at the Taxi Stand of Life. The pocket timetable gives details of return trains from New York and Stamford to Glenbrook, Springfield, Talmadge Hill and New Canaan. There is an ad at the top of the page: "Alcohol and Drug Helpline," it says. "Information & Treatment Referral Free. Confidential." Well, *alleluia*!

drinkers will meet with the same incomprehension as vegetarians. Bars are generally men-only places and range from dark rough-and-ready dives to places with a rather chintzy ice cream-parlour atmosphere. - from *Romania: the Rough Guide* (£10.99), just updated by Tim Burford and Dan Richardson.

WORLD COVER
The winning LottoAid numbers for draw on 2nd April 1998 are:
1st: 021222 2nd: 021600 3rd: 021300 4th: 021175 5th: 021508
Special numbers: 021600 021300 021175 021508
Total of proceeds from LottoAid go directly to help support the fight against world poverty.
For details of how to play LottoAid see the back of the ticket or call 0800 021508.

WORLD COVER
ANNUAL TRAVEL INSURANCE
CALL US ON 0800 365 121

A train
The Eastern and Oriental Express (0171-805 5100) has launched a Summer Promotion on the train between Bangkok and Singapore. For departures between this week and 17 September, passengers on the luxury train get a night's accommodation at both the Oriental in Bangkok and the Mandarin Oriental in Singapore. The fare is £800 per person; unfortunately, this excludes the cost of flights to Asia.

A boat
A new high-speed vessel starts sailing between Liverpool and the Isle of Man on 22 May. The SeaCat, operated by the IOM Steam Packet Company (0990 523523) will take two and a half hours to reach the port of Douglas. A return ticket to the island will cost £32.

A plane
This week American Airlines begins flights from New York direct to Cuzco in Peru, close to the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu. For the first time, travellers from Britain can reach Cuzco with a single change of plane - leave Heathrow at 4pm and, even with a refuelling stop in Lima, you'll be high in the Peruvian Andes in good time for breakfast the following day. Journey Latin America (0181-747-3108) quotes a fare of £832 return, including taxes.

A room
Hotel rates in Britain have risen faster than anywhere else in Europe in the past two years, according to the European Business Travel Index published yesterday by American Express. Increases average 9 per cent - while in Berlin, prices have fallen by 7 per cent.

A meal
The Independent reported this week on the spread of "Red Tide" in Hong Kong, involving algae carrying a toxin that gives water a crimson tinge. In response, the travel health specialist MASTA is advising visitors to the former colony to avoid eating fish and seafood. "The symptoms can occur within minutes of finishing a meal," says travel health adviser Sue Taylor. "The toxin causes sickness, diarrhoea and, in extreme cases, paralysis and death."

For further advice, call MASTA on 0891 224100.

A drink
"There is a great deal of drinking in Romania, as you will soon notice, and most crime is alcohol-related. Non-

A week from now...
... you can learn about Italy in the Age of Turner in a study day at Allcyn's School, Twyn Road, London SE22. The event ties in with the exhibition of the same name at the nearby Dulwich Picture Gallery. It includes a lecture on the origins of the Grand Tour by Professor Edward Chaney. For tickets to Saturday's event, price £25, call 0181-693 6911.

A month from now...
... you should be heading north for the Highland Festival 98 - a celebration of arts and culture throughout the Highlands and Islands, which lasts from 22 May to 6 June and stretches from Thurso to Portree and Ullapool to Inverness. Call 01479 810363 for details of events.

A year from now...
... a fortnight in Puerto Vallarta will cost £1,169 at the Paradiso all-inclusive resort in Mexico, travelling from Gatwick or Manchester with Thomson (0990 502046).



The rain of St James

... certainly falls on the sacred city of Santiago de Compostela. Yet this adds to the unexpectedly electric atmosphere, writes Elizabeth Nash

"You have to see Santiago with its stones drenched," they tell you, which is just as well because it is rare in this windswept north-western corner of Spain for showers to hold off for long. But don't be put off. Despite grey skies and darkened granite walls sprouting green moss, this is one of the jauntiest cities in the country – quite an achievement for Europe's top Christian pilgrimage site.

Forget dour priests, pious penitents and tacky religious souvenirs. Santiago, supposedly the resting place of Saint James the Apostle, crackles with an air of lively celebration. Partly this is to do with the exuberant architecture, a sublime ensemble of Gothic, Romanesque and Baroque, dominated by the cathedral, which Jan Morris calls "unquestionably one of the great buildings of the world". Partly too, as a university city, 30,000 students create an irreverent buzz and an electric nightlife.

The city fathers have restored and pedestrianised the entire medieval centre and, despite centuries of mass tourism, have held in check the proliferation of devotional kitsch. In the 11th and 12th centuries the city received hundreds of thousands of pilgrims a year, and to help them a French monk wrote the world's first tourist guide in 1140. Chaucer's Wife of Bath had "been in Galicia at Seynt Jame", and many today similarly take the road to Santiago as much for fun as for faith.

You'll see pilgrims with their trademark staff and cockleshell at any time, but especially on 25 July, St James's Day. Every seventh year, when the day falls on a Sunday, is declared a *Jacobo*. The next one is 1999, when millions will flock to embrace the silver, jewel-studded statue of the apostle high up behind the altar. It is an engaging sight, from a seat in the transept far below, to see a succession of tiny white hands emerge either side of the dazzling figure to clasp it round the neck.

For special services the giant incense burner, the *botafumeiro*, as tall and round as a priest, is hung from a complex pulley system and swung by eight men with ropes. Designed originally to obliterate the stench of a mass of travel-worn pilgrims, it swings in huge arcs followed by the eyes of the faithful who fear it will fall on their head. "The risk heightens emotions," remarks a local guidebook, with an astute nod to ecclesiastical psychology. Outside, on the magnificent Obradoiro square, which is constantly alive and at the same time soothingly tranquil, is the Hostal de los Reyes Católicos, built in 1499 as a hospice for sick or weary pilgrims and said to be the oldest hotel in Europe. Take a drink in the bar, or a tapa or two in the cellar tavern if five-star luxury is beyond reach – though stay there if you possibly can – and peek at the gorge-

ous inner courtyards with their delicately carved granite fountains.

The plops and gurgles of dispersing rainwater form a constant accompaniment even when the sun is shining, reminding you never to move without your umbrella. The white-clad motionless performance artist in the square carries a white umbrella to protect his sodden robes. Souvenir shops in the medieval lanes contain mercifully few light-up virgins and waxen body parts, but countless miniature *botafumeiros* and a good selection of silverware set with jet, including umbrella-shaped earrings.

Between each shop there is a bar or restaurant, with some of the most startling window displays of sea creatures I have ever seen. Crabs and lobsters two feet wide strain in their tanks against fat rubber bands that bind their terrible claws. Fish with jaws agape, teeth bared, languish on a white dish, and an octopus turned upside down, its tentacles tucked beneath its head, exposes its rows of beady suckers in all directions.

Overcome your fears, these establishments are relaxed and user-friendly. Drink the fragrant white Albarino or Ribeiro wines, among the finest in Spain. Locals drink rough wine from a plump white jug in little porcelain dishes called *cuncos*, but you should stick to the good stuff poured from bottle to glass, and buy the jug and dishes as souvenirs. Other delights include



Saints and street cred: despite grey skies and darkened granite, Santiago de Compostela is one of the jauntiest cities on the country – quite an achievement for Europe's top pilgrimage site

Photograph: A Woolfitt

Santiago tarts, made with almond flour, and creamy breast-shaped cheeses known as *testas* (titties).

A lone bagpiper, whose mournful tones wrap themselves round the granite arcades, adds to the atmosphere. Or a *nina*, a stu-

dent musician, clad in black velvet, plays for tourists to fund his studies. Down his back pastel satin ribbons trail, adorned with rosettes as fat and pink as the camellias that nod from trees in ancient courtyards or lie splattered on the damp earth.

The only airline flying direct to Santiago de Compostela from Britain is Iberia (0171-830 0011), which flies from Heathrow. The lowest fare is £183 return. Spanish Tourist Office: 22 Manchester Square, London W1M 5AP (0171-486 8077).

Rugged and roasted

If you thought a good Sunday roast was the prerogative of the British, then a visit to the small Spanish town of Sepulveda is an eye-opening and mouth-watering experience. An hour and a half's drive north of Madrid, in the rugged and beautiful Castilian countryside, Sepulveda is a favourite destination for hungry *madrileno*s and a shrine to the culinary art of *el cordero asado* – roast lamb.

At midday on Sunday, there's still a sleepy air to the place, with most of the noise in the narrow cobbled streets coming from low-flying swallows and martins. But the doors and shutters of the medieval buildings are beginning to open to reveal restaurants after restaurants.

All feature *el horno de leña* – the wood-fired oven in which Castilian roasts are traditionally cooked.

In a well-rehearsed ritual, my *madrileno* friends Jaime and Isabel book a table at El Ismael, and we get a tantalising preview of lunch as the chef fills the oven with individual earthenware casseroles containing the legs of lamb, daubed with olive oil



and herbs and surrounded by potatoes, before we set out to work up a serious appetite.

Sepulveda is the gateway to the Hoecas de Duraton natural park, where the river Duraton carves out a deep winding gorge, home to a colony of griffin vultures. They wheel and plane below us, no doubt working up their own appetites, as we follow a well-trodden path

to the tiny church and ruined monastery of San Frutos. In spring, the countryside is very green, the wild flowers blooming everywhere and there are flocks of goats and sheep, which remind us of lunch.

In our absence, Sepulveda has filled up with smart cars bearing Madrid licence plates, and the Ismael has become as convivially boisterous as only a

Spanish restaurant can be. There is a menu with a choice of items, but everyone seems to be eating the suckling lamb.

Ours arrives, crisp on the outside, tender and pink within, and plenty of it. *Perfecto*, pronounces Jaime. We have to agree. A robust Rioja red, a wheel of crusty bread and the freshest of salads adds to the wealth of textures, colours and tastes, and there is just enough room for a cooling velvety flan, and warming velvety brandy.

Before the journey back we wander, rather slowly, round Sepulveda. It boasts one of Spain's oldest town charters, and with its steep alleyways, Romanesque churches, the remnants of the old walls and views over the Duraton, would look great at any time. In the afterglow of lunch it is wonderful.

If you are not blessed with *Madrileno* friends or a smart car bearing Madrid licence plates, you can reach Sepulveda by bus from Segovia, itself relatively easy to reach by train from Madrid.

Mike Webb

The Garden Isle of Madeira

7 nights on the beautiful island of Madeira from £325
or for £10 per night supplement upgrade to the 5-star deluxe Savoy Hotel

Join us for a 7-night sojourn on the beautiful island of Madeira departing from London Gatwick and enjoy a week of relaxation or partake in a variety of interesting optional visits to tropical gardens and lovely houses. In addition we are able, for a small supplement, to offer a hotel upgrade to the 5-star Savoy Hotel, representing an excellent saving from tariffs that might be found elsewhere. If therefore you are looking for a Summer break, then this is an offer that should not be missed.

THE HOTEL MADEIRA

This modern 3-star hotel is located within a short walking distance of all the principal attractions of Old Funchal and of numerous excellent restaurants. All rooms have telephone, bath, WC and most have balcony. Its roof terrace has a panoramic outlook over the town. The hotel has a dining room for breakfast only. On occasions, an alternative 3-star hotel will be used.

THE SAVOY HOTEL

With panoramic views of the mountains and sea the Savoy Hotel offers a high level of service. This hotel has 350 spacious and comfortable guest rooms with



air conditioning, a balcony, radio, colour television with satellite and minibar. The Savoy's other facilities include 2 saltwater swimming pools, three restaurants, a library and various shops.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

1996 Tuesdays - per person in twin
June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 £325
July 7, 14 £325 - July 21, 28 £345
Aug 4, 11, 18, 25 £345 - Sep 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 £345
Single supplement £195.00
Upgrade to Savoy Hotel £70.00 (single £225)

Tariffs including: return flights, 7 nights accommodation (based on twin and breakfast basis at the hotel), UK departure tax. Not included: travel insurance, meals, tips. All prices subject to change. Our terms and conditions of booking (available on request) shall apply to all reservations.

0171-616 1000



VOYAGES JULES VERNE

21 Dorset Square, London NW1 6GG

Travel Promotions Ltd. ABTA 1661 ATOL 1838

Internet: <http://www.vjv.co.uk>

Our offices are open for telephone reservations weekdays 9am to 5pm and at weekends 10am to 5pm. For personal calls, our office hours are 9am to 5pm weekdays only.

HOLIDAY FRANCE & SPAIN

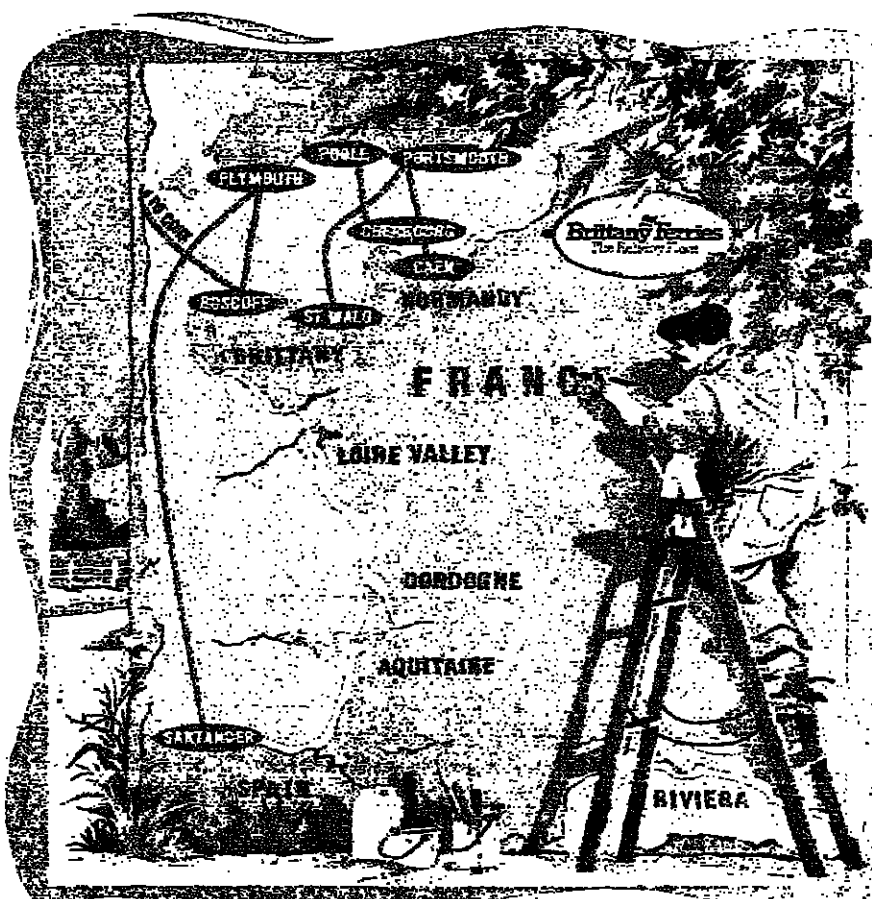
DIRECT

LUXURY
CRUISE-FERRIES
AWARD-WINNING
SERVICE

EXCELLENT
RESTAURANTS

DIRECT
TO BRITANNY &
SPAIN

IDEAL FOR
ALL OF HOLIDAY
FRANCE & SPAIN
HUGE CHOICE
OF HOLIDAYS



Sailing with your car to Holiday France?

Why drive the long way round when you can sail with us, direct to Brittany, Normandy and Spain?

Our luxury cruise-ferries, with their award-winning service and value, land you closer to where you'd like to be, saving you wasted fuel and effort.

And our huge range of self-catering and self-drive holidays and breaks offer you all the finest pleasures of Holiday France and Spain.



BROCHURES 0990 143 354 RESERVATIONS/INFORMATION 0990 360 360
OR SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

1996 Brochure range: Ferry Guide • Gite Holidays • Holiday Homes & Hotels • Luxury Camping Holidays • Golf Breaks • Hotel Breaks

Hampstead - Keats loved it. Constable painted it... and Sarah Jewell spent a day exploring its other riches

Hampstead, hill-top home to the rich and famous, first became fashionable in the 18th century when the discovery of spring water transformed the rural village into a sophisticated Georgian spa. The remedial waters, the fresh country air and the wide open heathland drew many creative spirits and the streets are studded with the names of writers, poets and painters who lived in the elegant Regency terraces that were built around the spa. Visitors to Hampstead today can still enjoy the invigorating breezes and catch glimpses of Constable's views over the heath - but mineral water is now sold in Arab tea-houses, French cafes and American diners.

The visitors

Sarah Jewell took Jessie Taube, 11, and Alice BrookSmith, 11, to Hampstead for the day

Sarah: Hampstead on a Sunday morning is peaceful and quiet as most of the shops do not open until midday. Parking restrictions are lifted so it is also easy to find a space before the throng of afternoon shoppers arrives to battle its way into Hobbs, Jigsaw, Waterstone's, French Connection and all the other swanky high street shops and restaurants.

Remarkable for having survived since the Fifties, the Austrian-style Coffee Cup on the High Street is warm and cosy and the ideal spot for breakfast. Fortified with egg on toast and hot chocolate we walked up Gaiety Road to Burgh House, the pretty Queen Anne building that is used for concerts and houses the Hampstead Museum of local history. We sat in sunshine in the beautifully tended garden and listened to Schubert's 'The Trout' being rehearsed inside before we looked around the exhibits of Hampstead's history from Anglo Saxon homestead to Nineties shopping mall.

Hungry again, we meandered past the Regency houses in Downshire Hill and stared at 2 Willow Road. Erno Goldfinger's Modernist adaptation of an 18th-century terrace (that may have looked chic in the 1930s but which looks rather drab today), past the cottages where Keats lived and on to the Freemason's Arms, a big friendly pub with a beer garden that welcomes children and serves a rather pricey Sunday lunch.

Real ale drinkers or those in search of a more intimate atmosphere should keep on walking to the Flask in Flask Walk, the original tavern where the spa water was bottled in the 18th century. For a tasty snack there's always La Creperie de Hampstead, the tiny pancake stall outside the King William IV pub on the High Street where freshly griddled savoury or sweet pancakes are flipped by two flushed Frenchwomen in white chef's smocks.

After lunch we walked to the top of the hill to visit Hampstead's oldest mansion, Fenton House. Built in 1693, it was left to

the National Trust in 1952 and has a delightful collection of china, furniture, needlework and early keyboard instruments. The beautiful polished walnut, maplewood and mahogany harpsichords and virginals are all still played and musicians often come to practise on Sundays.

By mid-afternoon the streets of Hampstead are seething with shoppers and tourists and it is time to head for the fresh air of the Heath. Either drive or take the 210 bus from Whitestone Pond (or those with boundless energy and no children can walk) to Kenwood House. This magnificent 18th-century neoclassical villa overlooks sloping lawns and an ornamental lake, has a fine collection of paintings and is the jewel in Hampstead's crown.

Jessie: I liked looking in the shops on the high street and I wanted to go into Gap but

it wasn't open when we arrived. I liked the Constable room in Burgh House and seeing the paintings of Hampstead before the houses were built.

Fenton House was really good and the lady who lives in the house gave us a really interesting talk about all the instruments. I especially liked looking at the keys on the harpsichords because the ebony and ivory had been swapped around on some of them and I wanted to play them. I enjoyed walking around the walled garden and there was a huge pink Magnolia tree.

Kenwood was very nice and I loved the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds of a little girl standing by a table with sheep and lambs next to her. The garden was very pretty and we ran all the way down to the lake to look at the bridge - and we were very surprised to find out that it was a fake.

Jewel in the crown: Kenwood House
Photograph: John Voos

Kenwood House. I thought the library ceiling was beautiful, it had pictures painted on it in pink and blue and gold and had a frieze of lions.

The deal Hampstead tube is on the Northern Line on the London Underground. Burgh House, New End Square (0171 431 0144) open Wed-Sun 12-5pm, free. Fenton House, Hampstead Grove (0171 435 3471) open March, Sat & Sun 2pm-5pm, April to October Wed, Thurs, Fri 2pm-5.30pm, Sat, Sun 11am-5.30pm, admission adults £3.60, children £1.80. Kenwood House, Hampstead Lane (0181 348 1286) open daily 10am-6pm, free. Keats House (0171 435 2062) is closed for refurbishment.

The villa and the village



TEL: 0171 293 2222

TRAVEL: UK, OVERSEAS

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Cycling Holidays

At last, a cycle magazine for family cyclists! With 164 colour pages ON YOUR BIKE magazine is an inspirational read for new and 'born again' cyclists of all ages and abilities.

Available in Halfords, good bike shops, newsagents or, for all three issues in 1998, send a cheque for £6.60 (payable to Kindlife Ltd.) to 6a Kenton Park Centre, Gostforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 4NN. Tel: 0191 229 0047

Cycle Breaks

Stylish Bunkies in rural cycling country. Cycle hire and repair services. Tel: 01904 766544 (24 hrs) e-mail: duncan@bunkies.co.uk

UK Travel

WELCOME TO THE UK

• BROCHURE - OUT NOW •
• DISCOUNTS FOR COUPLES •
• PETS GO FREE •

• Scotland, North York Moors, Peak, Wales, East Angles, Kent, Sussex, Cornwall, Devon, Lake of the Isles, West Country • Ireland • prices from £100 UK over land, ferry £140

01756 702200

WHEELS WONDERFUL Cycling & Walking holidays. Shropshire. For Colour Brochure 01562 707956

Special Interest

BRIDGE & SCRABBLE WEEKENDS. Eight industrial adventures, rural surprises & cultural highlights. ACORN ACTIVITIES 01432 83000

PAINTING & POTTERY HOLIDAYS. Gourmet cooking, crafts, photography, discounts. Woodwork and Garden Design. ACORN ACTIVITIES 01432 83003

Africa

TAILORMADE SAFARIS

ZIMBABWE, BOTSWANA, NAMIBIA, ZAMBIA, KENYA, TANZANIA & AFRICA

Luxurious remote lodges. Walking, canoeing, riding and vehicle safaris with the very best guides. Superb cuisine. Adventure with comfort. Call us to create your ideal safari. Tel: 01694 628979 Fax: 01694 628979 66 Palmerston Rd, Southampton, SO9 1ST

AFRICA EXCLUSIVE

SUNNY DISCOVERY Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi & the Cape. Totally Real. Safaris & fly-drives to guest farms, remote bush camps & Britain's BEST Self Drive National Parks. Widest choice. Beginners very welcome. Tel: 01847 4748 Enquiries: 0181 232 9777 ATO-ATOL908

Activity Holidays

Escot Estate, Honiton, Devon 31st July - 10th August 1998

Campus

The Summer Arts Holiday for Adults and Children

Campus is a theatre, dance and music holiday, with workshops, therapies and sports backed up by organised children. These elements blend together in the space and tranquility of the Devon countryside to create a safe, friendly and stimulating environment and magical family holiday.

For a free brochure and more information, contact Campus Holidays. Campus, P020 032, Times 709 710 or telephone 01488 821396. Fax 01488 821353 or e-mail: campus@campusholidays.co.uk

Self Catering UK

HOSEACONS COUNTRY COTTAGES

Hand-picked cottages throughout Britain. Coastal and countryside. Free colour brochure. Phone 01502 502 603. Quote C4556

RED ROSE COTTAGES Lancs. Close pretty villages, country side, heritage & coast. 01290 427310

Cotswolds

FARMHOUSE SLIPS 7-11 Green's cottages • converted stables slip 2, 3, 4, & others 01908 894310-174

Devon & Cornwall

Cornish Traditional Cottages

Self catering cottages in both coasts of Cornwall and Devon. For your FREE brochure phone 0990 134967

Cornish WELCOME COTTAGES

1998 best ever full colour brochure 01796 702201

FREE COLOUR GUIDE to the 500 best value cottages in Devon (01271) 378222

DEVON SPECIALISTS Choose from over 430 cottages. 01450 852508 (01271) 378222

DEVON CONNECTION luxury houses, cottages. Tel: 01548 560 564

CORNWALL AND DEVON 300 cottages throughout. (01752) 207171

English Country Cottages

AN UNRIVALLED choice in England's loveliest areas. Free 436 page colour brochure. Ring (0990) 851111 or 01206 872044

sykes cottages

Superb cottages in Northumbria, the Yorkshire Dales & Moors, Borders, The Lakes, The Peak District, North Wales and Shropshire.

01244 345700 www.sykescottages.co.uk

Holidays Afloat UK

BEAUTIFUL WATERWAY. Surrey. Hants. Lux boats. (01256) 702881

BRITAIN'S BEST Self Drive Narrowboat Holidays. Widest choice. Beginners very welcome. Tel: 01736 731275

The Lake District

MILLER HOWE Hotel and Restaurant. Windermere. It's not just our view... The Lake District has difficulty raising up with anything to match Miller Howe's view over Lake Windermere.

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

Wonderful early season hotel. Greatly available. For reservations/brochure please telephone 015394 42536

LAKE DISTRICT WELCOME Cottages. 1998 colour brochure. 01753 702201

NR CONISTON WATER Charming Georgian House with garden by river. Situated in the heart of the Lake District. Tel: 015394 41715

London

CLARIDGES

Whether you're celebrating a special anniversary, birthday or simply celebrating life, why not enjoy a weekend break at Claridges, The Savoy or The Berkeley.

from only £479pp

For a FREE 4 Colour Brochure call: 01484 435353 7 days

Northumbria

NORTHUMBRIA the ultimate holiday. Self catering cottages in the heart of the Northumbrian countryside. Tel: 01756 799821

Supers Cottages Northumbria, Dales, Lake District, Peak, Sussex Cottages. 01244 345700

The Peak District

PEAK COTTAGES Quality self catering in Derbyshire Dales & Peak. Brochure 01142 620777

Pembrokeshire

NEWPORT Romantic cottage by sea. Vacancies throughout season. Tel: 0171 525 9816

Sussex

SEDLISCOMBE Brickwell Hotel, Battle. 1600 Tudor Manor. 2 night break £102pp DBB. 3rd night accommodation free, pay £30 only for dinner & breakfast. Tel: 01323 870253

Yorkshire & The Dales

YORKSHIRE DALES Moors, coast, Peak & Lake District. Over 200 self catering cottages. Yorkshire Cottages Yorkshire, Water St, Skipton. 01545 175 (01759) 700672

DALES BEAUTIFUL RENOVATED Stone Barns. Sleep 4 to 12, pet friendly, welcome. Brochure 0800 854500

NORTH YORK MOORS Nat Park over 150 holiday cottages in Robin Hood's Bay, Whitby & Scarborough. 01723 276777

Norfolk

NORFOLK BROADS luxury cottages in picturesque secluded location. New and leisure centre close by. Sit 6. Available June onwards. 01603 784061

Scotland

GOLF FOR BEGINNERS AND IMPROVERS

Make a start and learn to play in lovely Borders area of Scotland. Professional instruction and accompanied games on several local courses.

Enjoy your stay in a country house as a family guest. Weekly courses.

01835 850 769

Wales

SCOTLAND'S WELCOME Cottages. 1998 colour brochure. Phone now 01753 702201

COTTAGES, HOUSES & Lodges. Over 160 in South Scotland. For full colour brochure call G M Thomson & Co. 01556 504030

SCOTLAND SPECIALISTS Choose from over 250 cottages. 01455 852505 (LNC211)

UNSPOLIT Ards, Ards, Spey, Spey, Spey. Book now 01827 815002

Wales

BRECON BEACONS Over 100 self catering cottages some sleep up to 30. Many less than £250 per week high season. 01874 670445

PENMONTGOMERY Award winning selection of quality, sensibly priced cottages. 01299 681297

Coast & Country Cottages

PENMONTGOMERY cottages. Waterway view. Inn nearby. Brochure Tel: (01437) 532495 any time.

Wales

NWALES Snowdonia Coastline. Llyn Penrhyn, Coastal and country cottages & farmhouses. Make holidays 01753 702201

HAY ON WYE Old Village cottage. Listed, garden, log fire. Spey. Tel: 01547 520005

BEAMING SEASIDE COTTAGE Spring, Summer, Winter breaks. Corner Penrhyn. Beautiful beaches. Lovely countryside. Sleeps 7. Garages room. Character & mood come. Book now 01827 834903

GOWER Iyde 175 Penrhyn. ensuite. DBBEM 227 Lc bar. AARAC Groom 01299 986440

AITO

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS

For a unique range of real holidays that are fully-bonded, flexible and definitely original - book AITO!

For a FREE copy of the AITO Directory listing all member companies, please telephone 0181 607 9080

THE INDEPENDENT

Fill your holiday cottage, villa or apartment vacancies.

Last year over a quarter of a million Independent and Independent On Sunday readers stayed on holiday in a rented villa, flat or cottage.

For only £4.70 per line or £8.22 per line if both Saturday and Sunday are booked (inc VAT), you can advertise your holiday home vacancies throughout the year. Your advertisement will appear in the Time Off section of The Independent on Saturday and/or the Travel Supplement of the Independent On Sunday.

TO BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENT

Either call The Travel Team on 0171 293 2219 Monday to Friday 10am - 5pm. or e-mail us at mhull@independent.co.uk or fax us on 0171 293 3156 or complete and return the coupon below to: The Travel Team, Classified Advertising, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and include your payment by cheque or Access/Visa/Amex/Diners Card

N.B. PRIVATE ADVERTISERS ONLY (TWO PROPERTIES OR LESS)

INSERTION DATES: CLASSIFICATION: I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Newspaper Publishing Plc or debit my Access/Visa/Amex/Diners account by £ CARD NO. EXPIRY DATE YOUR DETAILS: NAME ADDRESS TEL NO: Day Evening SIGNATURE

For further details please call The Travel Team on 0171 293 2219

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

The case of Hercule Poirot's Devon

In the first of an occasional series following in the footsteps of fictional characters,

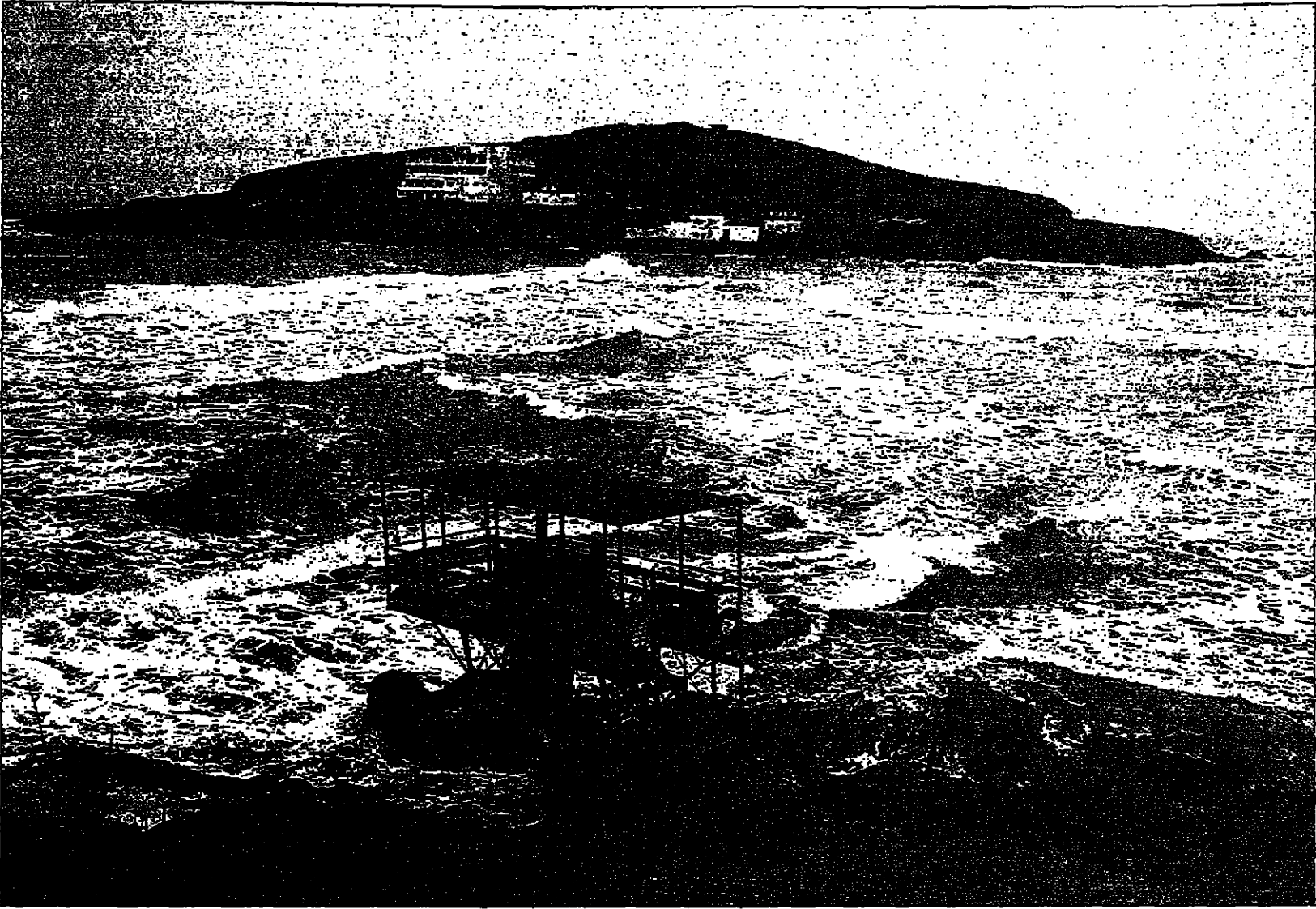
Linda Cookson tracks down Agatha Christie's legendary Belgian detective on two of his notable visits to the south coast

Agatha Christie was born in Torquay in 1890, and retained an enduring love for Devon. Small wonder, then, that several of her Hercule Poirot novels take pleasure in introducing the continental super-sleuth to the delights of her native region.

In 1941, in *Evil Under the Sun*, Poirot is sent on holiday to a place that had particularly captured her imagination. As the book opens, he is reclining in a deckchair - with trademark moustache "magnificently befringed" - surveying the bathing beach of the luxurious "Jolly Roger Hotel" on "Smugglers' Island". Happily, it requires very little detective work for a modern reader to be able to pinpoint the location and, nearly 57 years later, to take almost the same holiday (minus the dead bodies).

Burgh Island, off the coast of South Devon, is connected to the seaside village of Bighury-on-Sea by a sand bar. If the tide is in, you'll need to make the crossing to the tiny island by giant sea tractor, a rickety-looking covered wagon on stilts. On arrival, you'll see the Burgh Island Hotel resting calmly, like a luxury Art Deco liner, amidst the surrounding green. Cross the mirrored foyer to the elegant Peacock Dome cocktail bar, arrange yourself decadently among the potted palms, order an *Evil Under the Sun* cocktail (an appropriately lethal concoction of brandy, apricot brandy, gin, grenadine and orange juice), and drink a toast to Poirot's choice of venue.

For those not already in the know, Burgh Island (which also features in *And Then There Were None*, as Nigger Island) is quite a find. It's a charming place for walking, with coves, beaches, cliff paths, rare flowers - and even a bird sanctuary. It can also lay



The mystery of Burgh Island: how do you get there?

Photograph: Age

claim to one of Britain's oldest pubs, the Pilchard Inn, built in 1336. But the undisputed jewel in its crown is the hotel itself.

Built in 1929, it became a pleasure palace for the 1930s glitterati. Guests included Noël Coward and Edward and Mrs Simpson, as well as Agatha Christie herself. Over the last 12 years, following decades of dereliction and disrepair, it has been restored by new owners to its former glory.

Non-guests can visit to take afternoon tea in the sun lounge with its fan-shaped glass roof and pastel-coloured Lloyd loom chairs. Or you can book dinner in the period ballroom/restaurant, and dance between

courses beneath romantic lighting from curved Art Deco sconces (formal dress is required). But for the ultimate "get away from it all" experience - and if you want to avail yourself of the pretty private beach and natural swimming pool, where Poirot was seen reclining - book one of the hotel's 14 suites. All have a bedroom, sitting room, private bathroom, sea view and in most cases a balcony, and all are beautifully furnished in the Art Deco style.

Perhaps the most fascinating of Poirot's Devon trips is less immediately relivable. In 1938, in search of a new summer retreat, Agatha Christie bought Greenway House

- a Georgian mansion in dense woodland overlooking the River Dart. The landing stage, Greenway Quay, is a few hundred yards across the water from the picturesque South Hams village of Dittisham. In 1956, in *Dead Man's Folly*, Hercule Poirot pays his creator a visit in her own home.

Invited to solve a mystery by Agatha Christie's tongue-in-cheek alter ego, detective writer Ariadne Oliver, Poirot arrives at "Nasse House" on the "River Helm". To get there, he travels through a typical South Hams landscape, "down a country lane which wound between high hedges on either side. Presently the ground

fell away on the right and disclosed a very beautiful river view with hills of a misty blue in the distance". *Dead Man's Folly* features Greenway House, the boathouse, the quay and the nearby youth hostel, as well as the village of "Gitcham" over the river.

Disappointingly for Agatha Christie fans, a snoop inside Greenway House itself is out of the question. It remains the private family home of the author's daughter and her husband.

The nearest a determined pilgrim can get is to visit Greenway House's gardens on one of the three days a year on which they are open to the public through the

National Garden Scheme (23 and 30 April are the remaining dates this year) or to visit the separate, walled nursery garden on the edge of the grounds. The latter is open to the public most afternoons.

But a stay across the Dart in Dittisham is perfectly possible - and a lovely way of sampling this distinctive riverside setting. The surroundings are reassuringly timeless. The brass bell to summon the ferryman for the crossing to Greenway Quay is still in use at the end of Dittisham's pontoon. And The Ferry Boat Inn - favourite pub in *Dead Man's Folly* of old Merdell, the ferryman - remains a convivial watering hole. The village's other pub, the Red Lion, is similarly friendly, and gets its own mention in *Ordeal by Innocence*, a non-Poirot novel set in Dittisham itself.

In its tranquil location, once famous for orchards of damson and plum, Dittisham is basically a potter's paradise. The pace of life is somewhere between dead slow and stop - ideal for long muddy walks by the river and creeks or across wooded high ground. And the location is especially appealing to river enthusiasts. Even Chief Inspector Bland takes to the water at one point in *Dead Man's Folly*, although Poirot sticks resolutely to dry land.

At Burgh Island Hotel prices for bed, breakfast and dinner per person per night range from £44 to £119 for a stay of five nights or more. For further information (including details about weddings, which can also be arranged on the island) call 01548 310514.

Many visitors to Dittisham choose to rent cottages. The main provider is Dittisham Cottages (01803 722561), which handles 20 or so properties. Told Hall Cottages (01548 853777) also has attractive properties in the village, mainly on the waterfront.

For those in search only of a brief fix of this corner of Poirot's Devon or for those limited to a short stay, the Red Lion Inn (01803 722233) charges £27.50 per person for bed and breakfast in a double room with private bathroom and river view.

Bed and breakfast for two with private bathroom in The White House, an 18th-century traditional stone-built cottage, is £25 per person (01803 722355).

Cheapest of the lot - and very pleasant - is bed and breakfast at Cott Farm, a working farm just outside the village and with more distant views across the Dart, at £10 per person for a double room (01803 722249).

At Dittisham, boats can be hired. Ring 01803 722375.

A frame around the world

If you really want to expose yourself to world's most beautiful places, says **Eric Kendall**, don't travel with a roof over your head.



If simply observing something has an effect on it, what does turning up with 300 tourists and a Boeing do? Try cycling instead. Photographs Penny Kendall

One of travel's great ironies is that visiting the place of your dreams leads (little by little) to its ruin. Meanwhile the tourist board tries to preserve its interpretation of what it wants you to see. It's a version of Schrödinger's paradoxical cat: if simply observing something has an effect on it, what does turning

up with 300 tourists in a Boeing do? And never mind "take only pictures and leave only footprints", what about the state of the exhaust on the bus that got you to the remote side of the island/mountain/rain forest in the first place?

The answer to this dilemma is off-road travel on a bicycle.

The people who throw up their hands in horror at the thought of erosion caused by mountain bike tyres in the hills presumably haven't tried riding any distance. It's hard work, which makes it self-limiting. Add enough luggage to survive out in the wilds and you're knackered long before you've made

too many dents in the turf. Which makes it sound about as much fun as mending a puncture in the rain. The trick lies in pacing yourself. Blowing off exactly what you want to chew leaves you in shape to appreciate the best bit - arriving in the most incredible landscapes to find no-one. Nothing to spoil the view, no sound to break the silence.

There is also the physical and mental challenge that is a key component for many "expedition tourists". To start with you simply don't know if you can make it, but succeeding in the face of the unknown is a rare pleasure. Some of these hiking challenges are incremental: working your way day by day from Land's End to John O'Groats, or from Calais to Venice means you don't give the knee-popping total mileage too much thought, and there are roads the whole way.

In the unlikely event of everything all going tediously to plan, it's still an adventure. Your objectives are so uncomplicated that all the great advantages of being out on a bike can be appreciated: your senses are going at full blast while the technical challenge of a rocky track - whether up or down - can be totally absorbing. For the rest of the time, the feeling of exposure to every element and the astonishing views make entering a building, even just a shelter, like switching off the lights. It's an extra reason to sleep al fresco, though there's often no option, anyway.

But if it sounds like a budget nightmare, don't forget that you're only doing it right if your bike costs more than your new kitchen and your paired-down selection of kit is worth substantially more than its weight

in gold. Minimalism is the name of the game, which doesn't come cheap. But it's an extraordinarily complete feeling to know that all you need to survive, day after day, is stashed in a couple of bags on the back of your bike.

In the saddle Off-road touring can be as extreme or gentle as you want to make it but needn't be long-distance or take weeks on end. The UK and Europe are full of weekend opportunities that can easily be reached by train. Mountainous regions generally fulfil all the criteria - they're spectacular, have interesting weather, and are full of tracks but have few roads.

For longer trips, a combination of quality bikes, good equipment and experience are essential, as is choosing the right area - many countries have heavily used roads and appalling standards of driving (whatever your intentions, you will inevitably have to use roads at some point on a trip). Judicious use of public transport is an effective way to save your legs for the best bits. Buses, trains, boats and planes are usually surprisingly accessible with a bike, but double check arrangements before booking tickets. British Airways has given me VIP status just for turning up with a bike. The same can't be said for all the rail services in the UK but the situation seems to be improving.

For access to the Continent, the European Bike Express (01642 251440; evenings: 01642 750077) provides coach travel with a bike trailer to various destinations in France, Italy and Spain.

The Cyclists' Touring Club (Cotterell House, 69 Meadow,

Godalming, Surrey GU7 3HS; tel: 01483 417217; WWW: <http://www.etc.org.uk>) represents all aspects of cycling in the

UK. Part of their work includes campaigning locally to maintain rights of way for cyclists. Two leaflets on off-road riding are

available to non-members if you send an SAE: Gearing Up, a fact file giving rules and tips for riding off road; and Forest Enterprise, which gives information on forest tracks open to cyclists. Members can also request excellent fact files on countries, which give information on destinations and routes and tips on what to take and when to go.

The Rough Stuff Fellowship (e-mail 100613.2347@compuserve.co) has regional clubs (which predate the invention of the mountain bike) for organised rides off-road.

THE INDEPENDENT

Eastern Canada's Winter Wonderland

Departs November 1998
6 Nights from £499 per person

- Return flights from London Heathrow to Montreal
- Five nights bed and breakfast accommodation in a Magog based on the shared occupancy of twin rooms
- Transfers between Montreal airport and the hotel
- Welcome drink on arrival
- Visit to Montreal and city tour
- Visit to Quebec city
- All airport taxes and air passenger duty
- Services of a representative

Join us this winter on a very different kind of break and see Eastern Canada at its very finest. Set in beautiful scenic countryside, this holiday combines clear blue skies and crisp snowy weather with a warm Canadian welcome and fine hospitality. There are plenty of seasonal activities on offer as well as an included visit to the romantic citadel of Quebec, and a tour around the sophisticated city of Montreal. With opportunities to ride on a dog sled and to venture across the border into Vermont, this holiday promises to be a truly special experience.

These holidays have been arranged in conjunction with Festive Holidays Ltd, ABTA V106X, ATOL 2172

Rep in England 1966/97 Newspaper Publishing plc
Rep Office 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL

Send for your brochure today, call our brochure hotline on: **0990 55 33 55** or return the coupon below to:

INDEPENDENT EASTERN CANADA OFFER, FESTIVE HOLIDAYS LTD, PATE COURT, NORTH PLACE, CHELTENHAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE GL50 4DY.

Independent Eastern Canada Offer
Please forward me a brochure:
Name (Mr/Ms/Ms) _____
Address _____
Post Code _____

☐ Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive future offers from Newspaper Publishing plc or from companies approved by Newspaper Publishing plc.

14 million people, from the Army, Navy and Air Force, need you.

SSAFA FORCES HELP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Help provide, in your area, friendship and support, that is the debt we owe to all serving and ex-Service men, women and their families. You need to have some free time, patience to listen, maturity, common sense and the commitment to understand and assist those who have problems and may be distressed.

Phone Ann Needle on 0171 403 8783 or write to her at SSAFA Forces Help, 19 Queen Elizabeth Street, London SE1 2LP
Registered Charity Number 210760. Est 1885

To advertise in this section please call the
Independent Traders Team
on 0171 293 2344

هكذا من الآخرين

Art or craft? A suburban patch transformed

Workshop: How do you create a garden in keeping with a Lutyens house? Anna Pavord offers some advice

We live in an Arts and Crafts period house in Hampstead Garden Suburb, one of seven terraced houses, designed by Lutyens, set round a square with formal front gardens. The houses are deemed to be of special architectural interest and are Grade II listed. It is our back garden which presents the problem. It is oblong and measures roughly 50ft wide by 40ft deep. It's a mess and badly needs to be rethought. We love the house and its setting but are ashamed of the garden in its present state. We are keenly aware of the importance of getting the garden right - mistakes can't be hidden in a small space. We are also keen to create a garden which is in harmony with its overall setting.



In search of harmony: Maralyn Roberts plans a recreation of an Arts and Crafts garden in Hampstead Garden Suburb
Photography: Nicola Harris

hedge and add two big box balls, on either side of the stone steps leading up to the grass.

Against the south-facing, left-hand border, the Robertses had put their rustic bench. It's the right place for it, because this is the sunniest spot in the garden. They could put up a wire arbour round it and grow rambling roses over it to swamp the seat with scent. Mrs Roberts could also use this wide south-facing border for the herbs she is keen to grow.

So the actual layout of the garden could be resolved quite simply, but its success will depend absolutely on the quality of the materials used in its reconstruction. Lutyens' modern engineering brick will not be a good match for Lutyens' originals. The Robertses will have to hunt reclamation yards to find matching bricks to cover the concrete area outside the dining room door.

And once they have got the bricks, they need a craftsman who knows how to lay them. Attention to detail was the trademark of the Arts and Crafts period. If the bricks are laid herringbone fashion, they ought perhaps to be enclosed in a border of bricks laid end to end in straight runs. And the Robertses might like to design a centrepiece for the brick terrace, as Gertrude Jekyll often did with her paths. They could set scraps of flint in a square, round a sunken nest of clay flowerpots - nothing too showy.

The retaining wall needs to look good too: concrete blocks, even rendered ones, will not do. The texture of the retaining wall that Mrs Roberts liked in the Hestercombe picture can't be achieved without using the same materials. And there must be plenty of space between the stones for hanging swags of Spanish daisy and small blue harebells. Texture comes expensive in London, but a Lutyens house shouldn't be fobbed off with less.

Maralyn Roberts wrote this letter after reading a piece I'd written about Arts and Crafts gardens for the Independent magazine. She, her husband and their two daughters moved into their home five years ago. Having finished updating the inside, she's now anxious to get to grips with the outside and create a setting that will reflect the special period quality of the house.

The little square is an unexpected delight, designed by Edwin Lutyens in 1909 with his usual fine attention to detail. The layout is simple and formal, the houses built of lavender grey brick, contrasting with a redder brick used round doors and windows. The most prominent houses, facing on to the road, have bow fronts with chequerboard squares of brick, alternating with clunch.

Which of the pictures of Arts and Crafts gardens in the original magazine piece most closely reflected the kind of gar-

den Mrs Roberts dreamed of? She pointed first to the neat clipped box hedges and topiary peacocks of the white garden at Hidcote in Gloucestershire, then at a length of drystone walling running parallel with Lutyens' water rill at Hestercombe in Somerset.

Well, that's a lot to get into a rectangle 50ft x 40ft, but it gave me a good idea of Mrs Roberts' taste. And as it happened, elements of both could easily fit into the space they've got. The main door into the garden leads on to an uneven concrete area which is crying out to be repaved in brick, laid herringbone fashion, like the original parquetry floor in the house.

The garden is wider than it is long, which is unusual in London, but the dimensions (5:4) are comfortable ones to work with. A very rough retaining wall, built of clinker and covered in mounds of periwinkle and

candytuft, separates the concreted area (which continues as a path along the back of the house) from the rest of the garden, set about three feet higher.

Privet hedges bound the garden on three sides and must be kept. The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is (quite rightly) fierce in protecting the area, and all residents have to submit plans for any alterations, even in their gardens. It was important that any new work should be sympathetic and likely to gain approval.

A wide border runs back from the top of the retaining wall, and most of the rest of the garden is lawn. The border is in the right place as the plants there will not have to share their food and drink with privet, which is a greedy beast.

You could fill it with old-fashioned flowers: peonies, columbines, poppies, tulips and lilies. The garden is formal in shape,

and Lutyens' overall design for the close is formal, too. It seemed silly to fight against that. Straight lines would be better than wiggles.

I suggested that the retaining wall be replaced with a better built one, using the flat, thin stones that Lutyens so often favoured for garden walls. Wide, shallow steps would line up with the door from the house to lead into the higher level.

Mrs Roberts wanted a pond. This could sit in the centre of the lawn, a plain rectangular pool made in the same 5:4 proportions as the rest of the garden and painted black inside to reflect the sky. The edging needed to be plain and restrained: cut York stone like the paths that Lutyens had laid to the front doors of the houses.

Along the back boundary, set in a narrow border in front of the privet facing the house, the Robertses could plant

cordon pears in a criss-cross trellis pattern. Arts and Crafts gardeners loved fruit trees, and this would provide a decorative element without having to widen the border there. A mixture of Williams Bon Chretien, Fondante d'Automne, Beurre Hardy and Packham's Triumph would provide blossom and fruit over a long season.

The lawn would need to be relaid once the pool was in place and the proportions of the lawn redrawn, making it less wide in relation to its depth. You could do this by nibbling at the borders on the right- and left-hand boundaries. At the moment, they are no more than a foot or so wide, leaving no space to plant in front of the privet.

When the lawn had been restored to more pleasing proportions, I'd surround it, Hidcote style, with a low clipped box

CUTTINGS

"You thought that highlighting brown-ended spider plants might be a mistake," writes Marian Wilson of Ravenshead, Nottingham, referring to a piece that appeared in *Cuttings* (Independent 28 February). "I have two large spider plants, which in spite of pampering, still dangle their brown tips. I tear them off in frustration, but the brownness creeps higher until, in the end, I've performed a complete leafectomy. I suspect the fault lies in under or overwatering. But which?"

That's one of the tricky things about houseplants. Symptoms often have entirely opposite causes.



But spider plants are greedy things and brown tips on leaves are often the result of underfeeding. They like to lap up Baby Bio every time they are watered.

Another common cause of brown tips is central heating. The plants can't take in water as fast as

they are losing it. Spider plants need liberal watering from now until autumn, though less during winter. If they are watered too much while they are growing slowly, they often develop unsightly brown streaks along the leaves.

Anyone heading to the West Country should make their way to the Lost Gardens of Heligan, where the Cornwall Garden Society is holding a spectacular Theatre of Flowers from 24-26 April (open 10am to 6pm, admission £5). Competitions, displays, demonstrations, music take place in the dramatically restored splendour of the Heligan garden, star of the recent television series. For further information phone 01726 844157.

WEEKEND WORK

Unfortunately we do not seem to be as far into spring as we were in February. I'm anxious about frost as many plants are ludicrously far advanced in growth. Our gunnera was smashed back by a late frost a few years ago and has taken time to build up its confidence again. Another shock might be terminal.

The rain has been ideal for newly planted trees and the like. Soak all bare-rooted trees in a bucket for an hour and stand plants in pots to soak in a tray overnight before they are planted. This will keep them ticking over.

Continue to plant vegetables when conditions seem tolerable. I have just put in two short rows of a French potato called Belle de Fontenay (Marshall's, £8.95 for 2kg). It makes smooth, kidney-shaped tubers with creamy

yellow flesh, excellent for potato salad. It's usually ready for lifting by the middle of June. The first row of rocket (Marshall's, 66p) has also gone in. It is as easy as mustard and cress to grow. Sow at two-week intervals for a permanent supply of young leaves. Growing your own highlights the outrageous price that rocket sells for in supermarkets. Try some on a window sill.

Mark barren daffodil clumps with a cane to remind you to lift, separate and replant the congested bulbs some time between July and September - well before the new season's growth starts again. A generous handful of bonemeal or some proprietary bulb booster added now will help to bulk up the bulbs and encourage them to perform well next season. Some people use foliar feeds for the same purpose.

Hyacinths can be planted outside when they have finished flowering indoors - with a handful of bonemeal to build them up. They sometimes take a season to recover.

Continue to sow seeds of annual flowers and prick out seedlings showing their first pairs of true leaves. I have been pricking out Zinnia Alborita (Mr Fothergill, £1). I fell for zinnias in a big way after seeing a fabulous bed of them at Great Dixter. Christopher Lloyd's garden in Sussex. He says the secret is to grow them without a check. They hate disturbance at the roots, so I've been pricking them out into single pots.

Keep on top of weeds. Bittercress and groundsel are in flower now and both are dedicated procreators.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

GARDENING

FAX: 0171 293 2505

EXTERIOR CONSERVATORY BLINDS

Reduce the heat in your conservatory by up to 30 degrees

Suitable for all types of conservatory

Easy to use manual or electric operation

Glorious English Summers with Millennium

AWNINGS

- Manufactured and installed throughout the UK
- A wide range of attractive fabric designs
- Extend your living space onto your patio
- Comprehensive 5 year guarantee

MILLENNIUM FREEPOST COLCHESTER CO4 4ZZ

CALL NOW FOR A FREE BROCHURE

0500 11 11 00

TURTLE DIRT TRAPPER MATS

At last - as seen at Garden and Flower Shows - the really works! No muddy footprints or pawmarks on clean floors and carpets!

Turtle Dirt Trapper door mats stop dirt at the door of home, conservatory or car with absorbent cotton pile removing wet, dry and even greasy dirt from shoes and paws. With non-slip latex backing, they are fully machine-washable at 40°C.

Available in seven colours and 3 sizes:

- Blue, Green, Black/White, Fawn, Dark Grey, Red/Brown, Black/Brown
- 75 x 50 cm £17.95, 75 x 100 cm £24.95, 75 x 150 cm £29.95
- Plus £2.50 P & P per mat.

(Also available with gripper rubber backing for use on carpets, please call for details of sizes and prices)

from: Turtle Mat Co., 82a Kings Road, Kingston, Surrey KT2 8WT

TEL: 0181 296 0366 FAX: 0181 296 0360

QUALITY WROUGHT IRON WORK AT REALISTIC PRICES

All Made - to - Measure Sand for Free. Distance No Object

Other products include dog gates, door grilles, balconies, in fact you name it - we'll make it

ROB TURNER

STALHAM, (01692) WORKSHOP 580091

EVENINGS 580098

Unit 16, Moores Yard, High St, Stalham Norfolk NR12 9AN

FEATURED ON BBC CRUFTS '98 PROGRAMME

DISPOSABLE PUPPY MATS

NOW, THERE'S A FRESH NEW WAY TO TOILET TRAIN YOUR PUPPY.

Super absorbent paper mats help train your puppy and protect your floor.

New, disposable PUPPY MATS are a revolutionary way to toilet train your puppy. Made from a soft, absorbent, highly absorbent paper, each mat soaks up approximately 1/2 pint of liquid, leaving no puddles and no residue. In addition, a non-slip waterproof backing protects your floor. Measuring 400mm x 395mm, PUPPY MATS are available in packs of 50 or 100.

50 mats £11.50 + £2.50 p.p. 100 mats £21 + £2.75 p.p.

SEND TODAY FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY MATS and say goodbye to messy toilet training

Call now on 01405 839922

Fax: 01405 839958

BEAUTIFUL GARDENS TAKE SHAPE WITH Agriframes

SALE NOW ON

FREE CATALOGUE

Agriframes Ltd., Brochure 523, Churchwood Road, East Grinstead, Sussex RH19 2HP Tel: 01342 310000 (24HRS)

GARDEN WATCHER KEEPS CATS OUT

Award winning ultrasonic cat deterrence system, by

£49.95

Including mats, adapter and 10m cable

STOCK NUTRITION STATION ROAD, YAKHAM NORFOLK NR19 1RD 01362 694957

WEATHER-VANES

- Craftsmen made in U.K.
- All steel, Super Quality
- 4 Sizes available
- 300 designs approx
- Prices from £29.99

Further details/brochure: Webbs Distribution Ltd, Unit 2, 15 Station Rd, Knebworth, Herts SG3 6AP Tel: 01438 814620 (24hrs) Fax: 01438 815047

Comprehensive brochure available

STOP DIRT IN ITS TRACKS!

WITH THE AMAZING

DIRT TRAPPER DOORMAT

TOTALLY EFFECTIVE MACHINE WASHABLE NON-SLIP COTTON PILE

The "The Viking Dirt Trapper" door mat really does work! Leaving your home free from dirty footprints. Made from fully machine washable cotton pile, it soaks dirt, sand and even grease from the soles of your shoes. Available in 12 sizes and 7 colours from only £17.99, wash, pile.

For more information about the amazing Dirt Trapper please contact THE DIRT TRAPPER DOORMAT COMPANY, 12 THURFORD RD, THURFORD, CAMBS CB28 7RN Tel: 01455 584522 Fax: 01455 583441

BLOOMS of Bressingham 35 PORTULACA

for £7.95 plus 7 plants FREE!

Portulaca FI Sindhal Mixed is the only FI hybrid Portulaca. With large bright and vivid flowers in a spectacular array of colours ranging through yellow, pure white, lilac, terracotta and deep pink. They are well known for their lasting power - staying open longer than other varieties and flowering earlier. Easy to grow and versatile, they are the perfect choice for beds, borders, tubs, window boxes and hanging baskets, they'll reach 15-20cm in height and are guaranteed to fill your garden with a burst of invigorating colour.

For every pack of 35 plants ordered, we'll send you a further 7 plants of the same superb quality absolutely FREE!

The plants are carefully grown in controlled greenhouse conditions to the highest standard, they are packed in a protective box and despatched by first class post to ensure you receive 42 healthy plants in good condition, complete with growing instructions. On arrival, they will measure approximately 7-9cm from stem up to plant base, ready for planting straight into your garden following our horticultural instructions provided. Despatch will be throughout May. Offer subject to availability.

GUARANTEE

- We undertake our commitment to service, quality and value by offering twelve months guarantee on all our plants.
- Please include delivery.
- You can return within 14 days for a full refund or replacement if not completely satisfied.

24 hour credit card order service

Portulaca Office, Blooms of Bressingham, Mail Order, Adm 965 (Bressingham), Diss, Norfolk IP22 2BR.

We deliver to all addresses in the UK, including Northern Ireland. Offer subject to 5-24-95. Available only through our Mail Order Division.

240 INDPOR

01245 326004

Please send me: ☐ Collection(s) of 35 Portulaca, plus my 7 plants FREE!

Name: _____ Address: _____ Postcode: _____

I enclose crossed cheque/postal order (address on back) for £: _____ made payable to Blooms of Bressingham or debit my Mastercard/Visa card by £: _____

Card No. _____ Expiry Date: _____

Orders to: PORTULACA OFFER, BLOOMS OF BRESSINGHAM, Mail Order, Adm 965 (Bressingham), Diss, Norfolk, IP22 2BR.

For use of Visa/Mastercard/Mail Order or Debit Card only. If you do not wish to receive future offers, please inform us by post. Please allow 14 days for delivery. Please contact 01245 326004 for more information.

240 INDPOR



Watch whose chair you sit in

The stuff of ... cool
Caledonia. Designer
heaven is alive and well
in Glasgow, writes
Sally Staples

If you want to combine avant-garde with the functional when you go furniture shopping, take a trip to Glasgow's Italian Centre and visit Nice House. There's a range of flamboyant designs in homeware and lighting that can only

be classified as distinctly cool. It might be hard to lounge in the distinctive Tom Dixon S-shaped chair (£950) but it certainly makes an eye-catching piece of furniture.

Another popular item at Nice House is the indestructible aluminium prison chair at a more accessible £195. And for those who want something to relax on, how about Antonio Citterio's luxurious three-seater Harry sofa popular?

Nice House also distributes for the Dutch company Droog and the accessories department offers innovative designs in glassware: Pyrex milk and sugar pourers (£42.25) and a selection of cobalt wobble vases - from around

£40. There are designer corkscrews and lemon squeezers, ashtrays and wine racks...

Manager Andy Garrold explains that Nice House aims to bring together products that are the epitome of good design in terms of both function and aesthetics. "Furniture, lighting and accessories from throughout Europe and America designed during the 20th century can be seen on display on the showroom floor. Classics from the design greats - Le Corbusier's 1927 Chaise Longue, for example - sell to those keen to buy themselves a piece of design history. And alongside that are contemporary items like the S-chair for those wishing to have a piece of cut-

ting-edge design in their homes."

The hallmark of designer products is often a breathtaking price tag and bargain hunters might find £6,000 for a S-tern storage system a little steep for a series of box-like shelves. The Quick-en Box, at £260, is neat way to convert a storage space into a desk - ideal for those who work from home and have limited space.

Nice House is at The Italian Centre Courtyard, Glasgow G1 1HD (0141 553 1377)

A good weed

The taste of ... the sea. The coast around the French port of Roscoff has become one of the most important areas for harvesting seaweed, writes Nikki Spencer

Any day now, this year's seaweed harvest will begin on the beaches of Brittany. Using ancient-looking scythes, a team of specially trained pickers will wade through rock pools, cutting the weed by hand, making sure to leave a stem so it can grow back again for the next year.

The amount harvested - between 100 and 500 kilos a day - is nothing in comparison to that collected and consumed in Japan, where they harvest the stuff using a machine looking like a cross between a land-craft and a combine harvester. But it is particularly significant because of the variety of seaweeds that grow in Brittany, and the quality of the water.

Every day, weather permitting, from now on until October the seaweed will be cut, put into buckets and taken to the village of St Pol de Leon, where it is sorted, washed and packed in salt ready to be dispatched to restaurants and supermarkets all over France, the UK (this is where Tesco, who started selling seaweed last autumn, get their supplies) and even Japan, when certain varieties are in short supply.

Until about 15 years ago, the main reason seaweed was collected in this area was for use in cosmetics and to provide fertiliser for growing the cauliflowers and artichokes for which the region is well known.

About 17 years ago, local people started to harvest and sell edible seaweed to restaurants. Michel Perzinsky and his partner Monique Vernier saw a gap in the market and set up Algoplus, a company that not only sells marine

algae as a fresh vegetable and in every conceivable form (seasonings, soups, sauces and bath products) but also provides thousands of visitors every year with tours of their factory and seaweed tastings.



Where to find seaweed

Many restaurants in and around Roscoff now cook with seaweed. Two where you can eat an entire seaweed menu of starter, main course and dessert - you can have a type of ice-cream with seaweed sprinkled on it - are: Le Temp de Vivre, Place de l'Eglise, Roscoff (00-332 98.61.27.28) and La Pomme D'Api, 49 Rue de Verdereil, St Pol de Leon (00-332 98.69.04.36).

At one of the best known chocolate shops in Brittany - and even in France - Histoire de Chocolat, 60 Rue de Siam in Brest (00-332 98.44.66.09) you can even buy chocolate with seaweed. The shop also operates a mail-order service.

Seaweed from Brittany is available at some branches of Tesco, price £1.99 for a 100g punnet. There are two varieties. Sea lettuce is green and feathery and can be used in cooked dishes or salads, and dulse is in rich red ribbon-like strips and is popular in soups and with pasta.

For tours of the seaweed factory and tastings contact Monique Vernier at Algoplus, Rue St Marie, St Pol de Leon, near Roscoff (00-332 98.29.13.06). The company is moving to larger premises in Roscoff in the summer.

GAMES

Look at these two sets of words:

1A: STICK, LIGHT, BIRTHDAY
1B: PARTY, ROUND, MARK.

In one of the sets, the three words have a common association - a word that can be linked to all three of them. In the other set, however, no such connection is intended to exist. Here are two more such sets:

2A: HOUSE, LION, BUTTER
2B: MAGIC, PLUSH, FLOOR

3A: WATER, TOBACCO, LINE
3B: SIXTEEN, SPIN, TENDER

I came across these puzzles in *Hare Brain, Tortise Mind*, by Guy Claxton (published by 4th Estate, £16.99), one of the most thoughtful books about thinking I have come across in a long time. As word-puzzles, there is nothing particularly

THINKING WILLIAM HARTSTON

special or unusual here, but Claxton cites them in the context of a revealing psychological experiment.

Subjects were given these and similar lists and asked to spot the connections. If they could not find the connecting words, they were asked to guess which of the triples had something in common. The results showed that even when people could not work out the right answer, they guessed correctly more often than would have been expected by chance.

One could, of course, put this down to some hidden linguistic similarity between words that have a common linkage. Perhaps they have more in common than the experimenters thought. Perhaps the experimenters were subconsciously making the triplets of unconnected words even more unconnected than they might have been. That theory, however, is firmly countered by an

even more striking experiment devised by Pawel Lewicki at the University of Tulsa.

Subjects were given a simple task involving numbers on a computer screen. For the purpose of the experiment, the screen is divided into four quarters by a vertical cross through the centre. Scattered about each quarter, a jumble of five digits appears, and the subject has to push one of four buttons to indicate which quadrant contains the sole number 6. After a pause, a different display of numbers appears, and the subject does it again. After seven trials, there is a longer pause, then seven more, followed by more blocks of seven.

With practice, subjects get faster. Now - and here comes the crucial point - although the location of the 6 appears to move randomly, there is a very subtle pattern hidden in the experimental design. It turns out that if you know where the 6 is in trials

one, three, four and six of each set of seven, then you can work out where it will appear on trial number seven.

No subjects are told about the pattern; when asked after the experiments whether they have spotted a pattern they all say no; and when told there is a pattern and asked if they can work it out, nobody has yet done so. Yet the experiments show that when subjects have reached optimal speed, their response times to every seventh trial are quicker than on the other six.

Unconsciously, we can detect and act upon patterns of which we are consciously unaware. We know things without knowing we know them, and act accordingly. Claxton's book is full of examples such as this. Of course, we all know them all the time. But you need to read the book to know that you know them.

CONNECTIONS: 1A (Candle); 2B (Carpet); 3A (Pipe).

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Stephen Watt-Smith, 49, maxillofacial surgeon

From my point of view, a game is the challenge of a three-dimensional problem. If it's a hole in the tummy, you just stitch up the wound, and other people won't know that there's four feet of bowel missing, or whatever.

When you reconstruct a face, you're dealing with function and appearance. If I make a new lower jaw and I get the angle wrong, then your teeth won't meet properly, chewing is compromised and speech deteriorates. People's social lives are destroyed very quickly if they're made miserable every time they look in a mirror.

The trouble with a face is that you can't de-glove its soft tissues. Until recently, if I was attempting to make a jaw, all I could do was guess at where the majority of the bone was arranged beneath the soft tissues. And if I got it wrong - when I was rebuilding an eye-socket for instance - then the patient developed double vision, which is very disturbing.

To cut quite a long story short, we now have a computerised system that can make an accurate model of any part of the patient's skull. All the little nooks and crannies are reproduced, and I can practise any surgery on-screen, or manufacture implants or plates before we actually go into the operating theatre. A sort of Blue Peter "Here's one I made earlier".

The game is identifying the problem and beating it. I'm a lousy loser. I might graciously shake hands with people after a cricket match, but I can't tolerate being less than perfect.

Some of the reconstructive surgery we did 20 years ago was so poor that we didn't dare ask the patients what they thought about it. If you're drooling saliva, and your facial appearance is grossly abnormal, then the quality of life isn't good enough.

Useful background material on this subject may be found in *Art and the Full Prosthesis* by Edward Samson. Sadly, however, that book has been out of print for some 20 years.

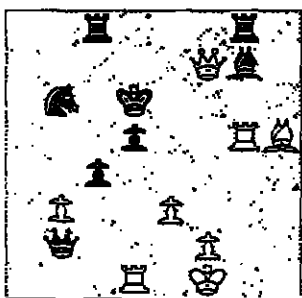
CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

You can divide strong players into two groups: those who are good at making things happen in their games, and those who are good at preventing things from happening - the proactive and the reactive, one might say. World champions such as Fischer and Kasparov fall into the proactive category. Their games shine with an energy that drives the game onwards and dictates the course of events. Champions such as Petrosian and Karpov, however, fall more naturally in the reactive category. Their strength lies in anticipating the opponent's plans and slowly stifling them.

Of British grandmasters, one man who is always trying to push the position into doing what he wants is James Plaskett. Even when things get totally out of control, as they do in the following game from the latest round of the 4NCL in Birmingham, you feel that he deliberately steered it off the highway.

White's 10.Qb3 made very little sense. Quite apart from allowing Black to double his f-pawns, White decided against capturing on b7 anyway. Black obtained a comfortable game from the opening, and White's 13.Kf1 followed by f4 and h4 was more an attempt to create a messy position than a logical attacking plan.

When Black played 18...b5, he must have been very content. 20.Bxb5 is met by 20...Nxd5 when both

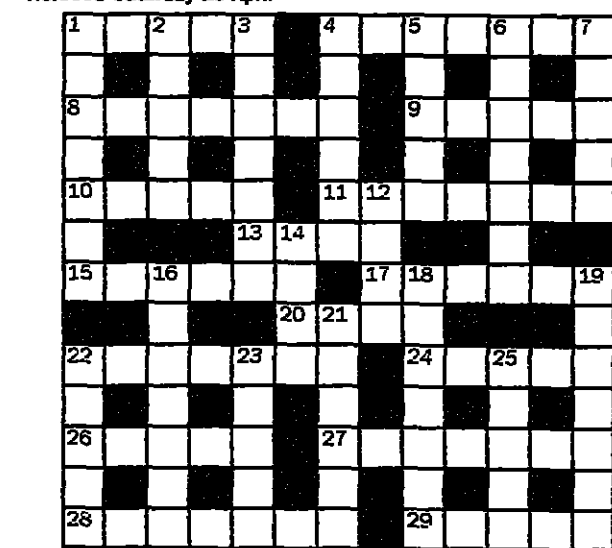


21.Rxd5 Bxc3 and 21.Bxd7 Nxc3+ win material for Black. Accepting the piece offer with 24...Qxb5, Black simply did not believe White's attack on the other wing, but with his king lured out into the open, the defence quickly proved too difficult. At the end (see diagram) 35.R1xd5+ Nxd5 (or 35...Kc6 36.Rc5+ Kd6 37.Rgd5+) 36.Rxd5+ Kc6 37.Qd7+ Kb6 38.Rb5+ Ka6 39.Qb7 is mate.

White: James Plaskett
Black: Nigel Povah
1 d4 Nf6 19 axb5 axb5
2 c4 e6 20 Nxb5 Nxd5
3 Nf3 c5 21 Rh3 N7b6
4 d5 cxd5 22 f5 Qd7
5 cxd5 d6 23 h5 c4
6 Nc3 g6 24 hxg6 Qxb5
7 Bg5 Bg7 25 gxf7+ Kxf7
8 c3 a6 26 f6 Nxf6
9 a4 Bg4 27 Bxf6 Kxf6
10 Qb3 Bxf3 28 Qxh7 Qc5
11 gxf3 0-0 29 Rg3 Rg8
12 Be2 Nbd7 30 Qh4+ Kf7
13 Kf1 Qc7 31 Bh5+ Ke6
14 f4 Rfe8 32 Rg5 Qb2
15 Qc2 b6 33 Qf4 d5
16 Rd1 Qb7 34 Qf7+ Kd6
17 b3 Rac8 Black resigned
18 h4 b5

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3588 Saturday 18 April



ACROSS
1 Follow (5)
4 Story told by Jesus (7)
8 Serious (7)
9 Loud (5)
10 Projection forming part of carpentry joint (5)
11 Row of houses (7)
13 Son of Adam (4)
15 Mob (6)
17 Points to be decided (6)
20 Teenage spots (4)
22 Financial support (7)
24 At no time (5)
26 Fire-raising (5)
27 Defensive tower (7)
28 Hold spellbound (7)
29 Source of energy (5)

DOWN
1 Voter (7)
2 Temptress (5)
3 Everlasting (7)
4 Small and dainty (6)
5 Happen again (5)
6 Haggles (7)
7 Run off together (5)
12 Dash (4)
14 Part of necklace (4)
16 Look after child (4-3)
18 OT book (7)
19 Word formed from initials (7)
21 Musical instrument (6)
22 Allotted portion (5)
23 Interior (5)
25 Speech organ (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Her, 3 Seas (Expos), 7 Manner, 8 Ours, 9 Congregation, 10 Siege, 12 Pledge, 14 Constabulary, 18 Menu, 19 Magnolia, 20 Agent, 21 Yet, 22 Plunge, 23 Stylus, 25 Omega, 26 Admit, 27 Agony.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South

| North | | East | |
|------------|--|-------------|--|
| ♠ Q 10 9 8 | | ♠ 3 | |
| ♥ 7 4 | | ♥ A 9 6 3 | |
| ♦ 7 6 5 2 | | ♦ 10 8 4 | |
| ♣ Q 10 4 | | ♣ A 8 6 3 2 | |
| South | | West | |
| ♠ A K J 7 | | ♠ 6 5 4 2 | |
| ♥ Q J 5 | | ♥ K 10 8 2 | |
| ♦ A K Q | | ♦ J 9 3 | |
| ♣ K J 7 | | ♣ 9 5 | |

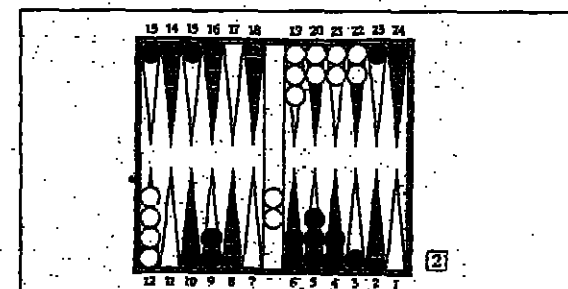
Even one-word pleasantries at the table can prove costly. There was the British player who reached Six No-trumps, inspected dummy to see 13 top tricks and said: "Pity!" His French opponents claimed that he had called: "Petit!" (which would have enabled them to win a trick). Fortunately, the tournament director was bilingual.

There was a less happy ending on this deal where South ended in Four Spades. The defence started with H2 to the ace, H3 to the jack and king and, after some thought, a third heart. It seemed clear that the suit was breaking 4-4 so, after studying dummy's spot cards closely, declarer flamboyantly requested: "Anything!" Dummy chose D2.

Two rounds of trumps then revealed the 4-1 break and, forced to abandon trumps, declarer tried the clubs. But East ducked the first round, and now there was no way of avoiding either a club ruff or, if trumps were drawn, CA and another heart.

So what should dummy have played at trick three? A club discard is surely best; then, as long as the clubs are not 6-1, the suit can be played safely after two rounds of trumps when the 4-1 break is discovered.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



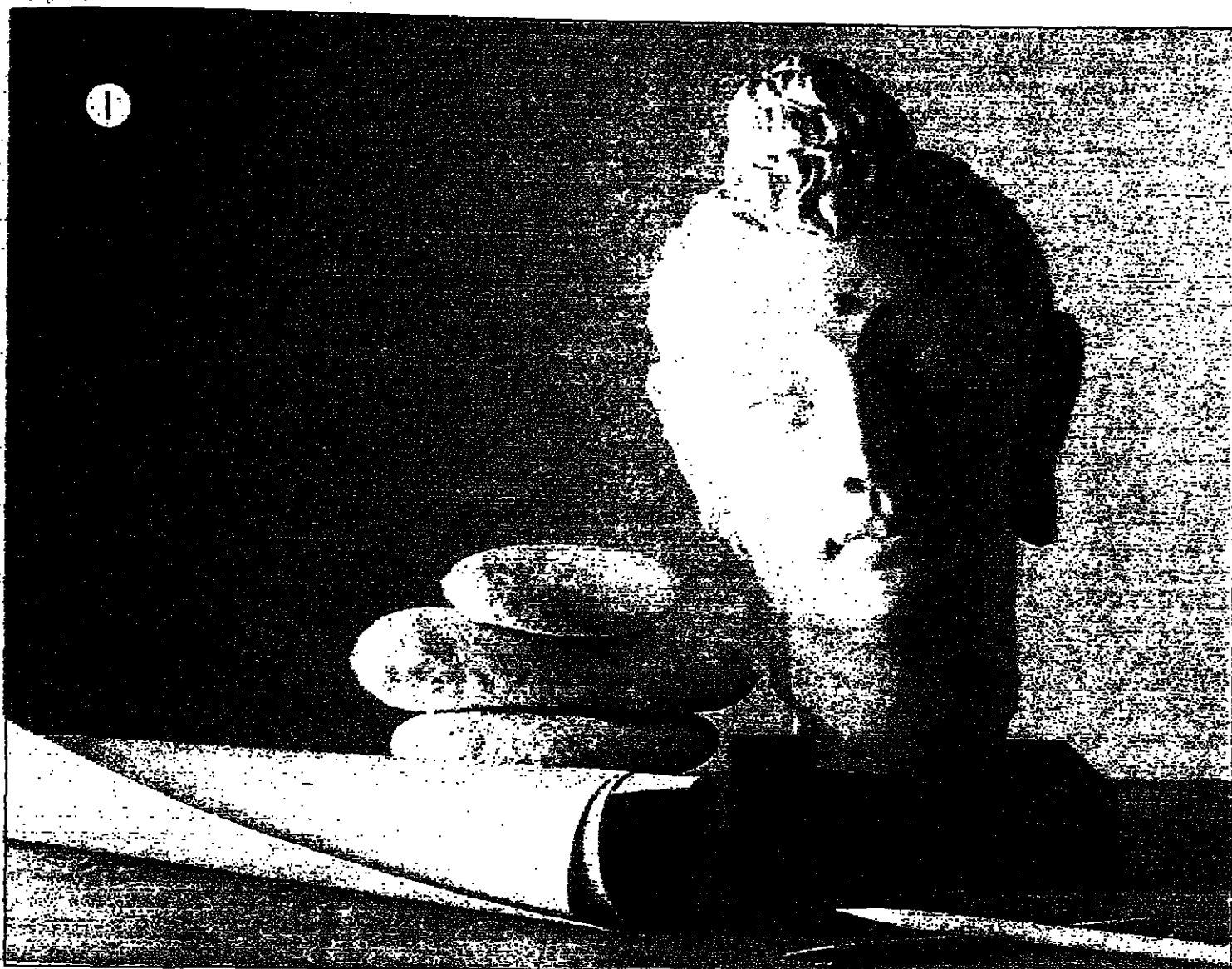
This position caused heated argument in the Double Fives chouette the other night. White (the team) had doubled early and then Black (the box) had turned the game around and put two of White's men on the bar. The box now redoubled. Three of the four team members dropped the double with but a moment's thought. The fourth (and strongest) member pondered long and hard but eventually he too dropped the double, muttering something like "I'm sure it's a take but we will lose a lot of gammons so maybe it's a drop."

This is not an easy position to evaluate but over the board White should reason something like this: "Black is likely to make his 3-point next roll but after that he is likely to try to prime my men rather than blitz them, as my strong home board will deter him from the blitzing option. This will give me time to bring in my two men and anchor on either his 1-point or 2-point. From there I will have a reasonable chance to hit a shot and win the game. Additionally, Black may not cover his blot on the 3-point and if I hit it I will be well back into the game. Finally Black may have difficulty getting his men out of my home board and I may get the chance to hit one of them as he tries to bring them around the board. All in all I think I have enough chances to win that I can accept the double, despite the gammon risk."

The lesson is that you cannot just glance at the board, see two men on the bar and drop the double. You must consider all aspects of the position and try to understand how the game will develop and what your winning variations could be. Occasionally you will still get it wrong but that is better than just making a subjective decision. Objective analysis pays dividends.

The stronger player in the chouette was swayed by the opinions of his weaker partners. He should have believed in his own analysis and taken the double.

هنا من الأحرار



Set in stone

Reproduction art can be clichéd – but who has a classical statue in their living room, asks Claire Gervat

What is it about statues? People fret about the pictures they hang on the wall, but ignore the potential of a well placed sculpture to add an immediate dramatic focus to a room. It can't be a question of price alone; it's been a long time since wealthy travellers on the Grand Tour were the only ones able to pick up some remnant of classical statuary to decorate the family pad.

The difference nowadays is that the humbler shopper has access to a range of high-quality reproductions in modern materials that mimic expensive marbles and bronzes. Not only that, many are available from the comfort of the nearest armchair – and often for less than the price of a night on the town.

Happily, these copies are nearly always less obvious than reproductions of famous paintings: the original of the head of Buddha, for instance, belongs to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, but will not draw cries of recognition in the way a Monet copy would. However, if you do feel your statue is a little too obviously new, you can always age it. There are plenty of home decoration books with detailed instructions on all kinds of antiquing effects, so you shouldn't have much trouble finding one that suits you.



1 Head of Buddha

This reproduction of an original 5th-century Buddha head is part of the Victoria & Albert Museum's collection. Made of Durastone with a limestone finish, it is 15 inches tall. Available from the V&A shop, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL (0171-938 8434), and from John Lewis, House of Fraser and other leading department stores countrywide, at £83.

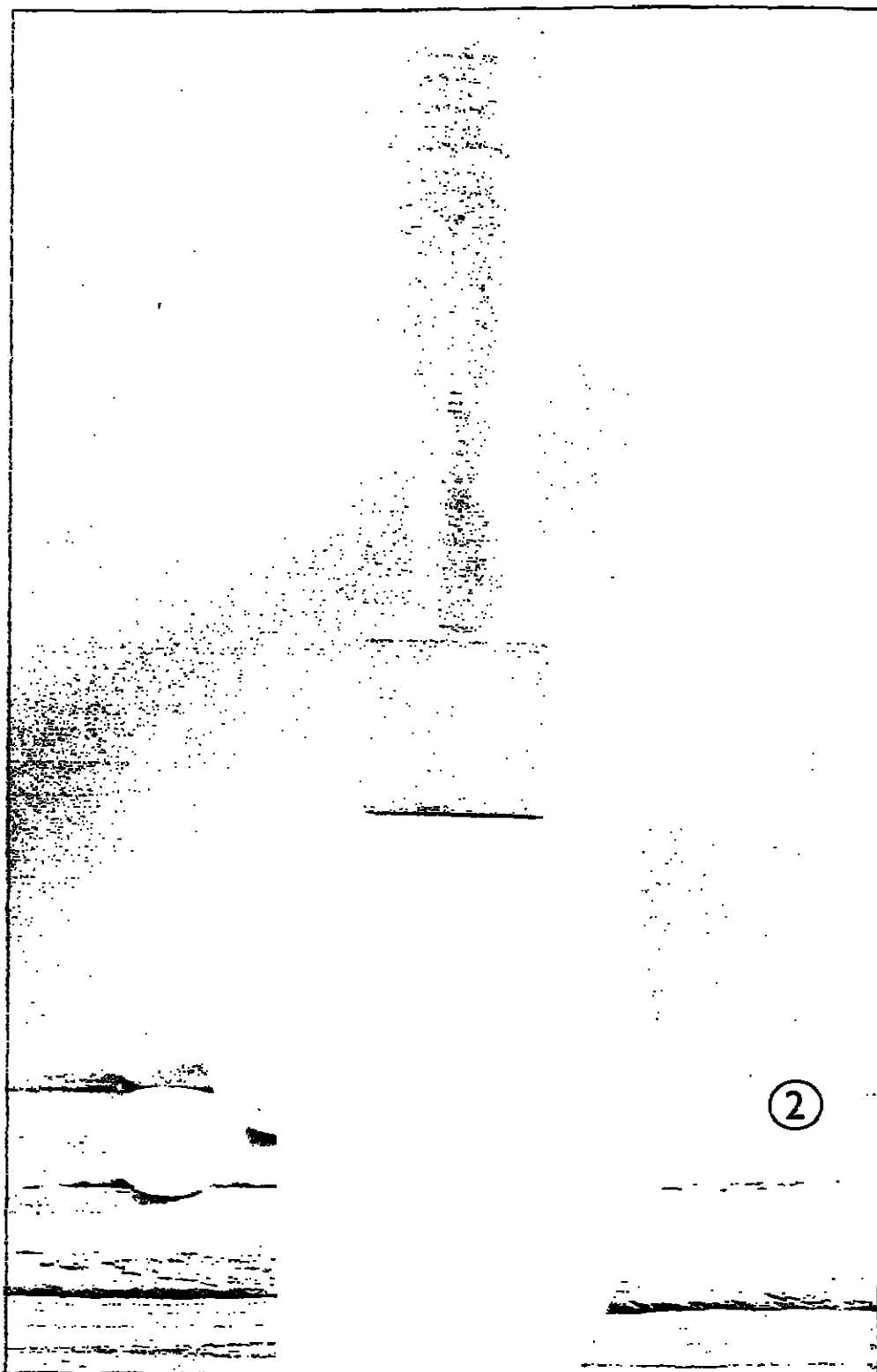
2 Modigliani head

Reproduction of one of a series of heads carved by Modigliani between 1910 and 1915. Made of reconstituted stone, it is just under 12 inches tall (excluding plinth). By mail-order from Ari Room on their 24-hour catalogue and order line 01993

770444, stock no 21387, £115 plus £2.95 p&p; white plinth available separately for £24.95.

3 Male torso

Cast from a first or second century AD Roman sculpture on display in the British Museum in London, the torso of a reclining man is thought to be that of Herakles. Made of plaster with a protective finish (C61080) or in a patinated "antiqued" version (C66180), 12 inches long. Available to order from British Museum Customer Services department, 0171-323 1234; allow eight weeks for delivery, £120 and £140 (antiqued). Limited stocks at the museum shops at Great Russell St, London WC1 and Terminal 4, Heathrow airport (0181-564 7720).



4 Arlington dog

Taken from a marble statue at Arlington, Cheshire, now owned by the National Trust, thought to be of a terrier that pined away after the death of its master Sir Bruce Chichester in the late 18th century.

Made of high-density plaster, hand-finished, with a smoky brown wash. Also in black from NT town shops only. Eight inches long. Available from the National Trust mail-order department on 01225 790800, stock no 49500, £16.99 plus £3.50 p&p.

THE INDEPENDENT

WIN a fabulous weekend break at Ockenden Manor in West Sussex



Take part in our unique competition and you could be enjoying a luxurious weekend break at Ockenden Manor, a beautiful Elizabethan manor in Cuckfield, a charming Tudor village, with views over the South Downs.

Set in 9 acres of beautiful formal and informal gardens, Ockenden Manor sits in comfort and charm. Each individually furnished bedroom is named after the two families who have owned the house since 1520 and this personal touch is reflected in thoughtful details such as fresh flowers and log fires.

Your prize would include two nights luxury accommodation for two in a superior double/twin room, full English breakfasts, candlelit dinners in the award-winning restaurant plus liquors with coffee and chocolates as you retire.

The prize must be taken by 31/10/98.

To enter this competition simply dial the number below answer the following question on line and leave your name, address and contact number:

Q: Name the infamous Tudor King who was renowned for transforming the English church?

0930 563 564

Ockenden Manor is offering Independent readers a special rate of £85 per person, per night which includes luxury accommodation, full English breakfast and dinner in the restaurant with complimentary chocolates and liquors. This offer is based on two sharing a double/twin room for a minimum two night stay. Valid until 30/6/98, subject to availability. To book call Ockenden Manor hotel on 01444 416111, mentioning The Independent reader offer.

Gifts and prizes are subject to availability. Winner's prize is valid until 31/10/98. Ockenden Manor Hotel is a member of the National Trust.

To have and to hold

Gina Cowen talks to Joanna Still about her path to the potters' wheel and the forms it has taken

Afternoon tea in Wiltshire at the home of potter Joanna Still is about as fine as the taking of tea can be: large warm kitchen set against a cold Easter weekend, the Aga surrounded by a wall of postcards like a mini-museum; delicious home-made lemon cake sitting plump upon a hand-made Still plate, glowing with rich blues, greens, terracottas, golds; tea poured from an ochre-green, salt-glazed pot (an early work of hers).

Out at the back through a steeply rising garden is the studio in a converted stable. There's a workspace below with wheel, kiln, clay, paints, glazes, and a showroom above. Your eye is immediately caught by a large and perfect jug – a model of pulchritude and practicality. On the wall is a huge poster from the recent exhibition London's Hayward Gallery, "Objects of Desire". It shows Picasso's *Plucher with apples* (1919) – one of the apples sitting on a magnificent bold-spouted jug. A strong feature of Still's jugs is their unashamed spouts, making them not only objects of desire but objects of good function. Not here the kind of jug that dribbles its contents anywhere but into the required container.

Not surprisingly her first love was shape (she is also

married to the sculptor Tim Harrison). "When I started I did not paint at all, I was much more interested in form." Herself quite impressive in form, tall and striking with strong expressive hands, Still started what has now been a 20-year voyage in ceramics having explored several other forms of work – linguist, secretary, fisherman, even highly successful restaurateur in Alaska. It was while working back in London at the Royal Institute of International Affairs that she



attended evening classes in pottery at the Addington Institute and suddenly "just knew that this was what I wanted to do". She decided to apply to Harrow School of Art (whose Studio Pottery course had such tutors as Michael Casson, Walter Keeler, Richard Slee and Mo Jupp). For the interview, she took the first pot she had ever thrown. "Actually, it broke in my bicycle basket and I had to stick it together." None the less she was accepted and completed a two-year course before setting up a studio at Ansty in Wiltshire.

In the early years Still pro-

duced functional salt-glazed stone ware, with forms inspired by the sturdy shapes of early English pottery. Now at her present studio in the Wiltshire village of Hindon, Still has gradually developed a more decorative approach, combining a growing interest in painting with that of form. A strong influence has been Minoan ware from Crete, with its bold vitality and flowing designs.

"There's a relationship between the throwing of a pot and the painting, in terms of the time and energy spent on it," she says. "You shape the form out of the clay in minutes on the wheel, it rises up almost in a single movement. The painting should be free flowing in the same way: formed swiftly with fluid strokes as energetic and spontaneous as the throwing." Still now works in red earthenware clay which is dipped in a cream slip then painted with oxides (and sometimes etched back through to the base colour in a technique known as "graffito"). After the first firing the colours are soft pastels. Then a final glaze (the kiln heating to over 1000 degrees centigrade) brings the colours into the rich hues of earth, sun, sky, sea, fire. Her decorations and motifs are inspired by nature: willow slim leaves brown on green, green on pale gold, waves of blue, a motif of falling feathers dotted with dust red.

A close friend is Georgina von Etzdorf whose workshop is just down the road and with whom Still has travelled to India over the last four years for research and inspiration. There is a similarity in the luminous

designs of von Etzdorf's fabrics and those Still paints on her ceramics. Both have an unerring eye for colour and line, though Still's fabric is, of course, solid clay. In her eminently functional

ware, the form is never obscured by the design it wears. It is always clear that these are objects to be used, not just admired.

Joanna Still's dinner plates, side

plates, milk jugs and water jugs start at around £15 and go up to £100. For commissions and stockists call 01747 820478; Joanna Still, 4 Beckford Cottages, Hindon, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6ED

THE INDEPENDENT

Summer Mallows

3 for just £10.95

Buy this super collection of 3 pot grown Summer Mallows (Lavatera) and you will be assured of a colourful summer this year and for many years to come.

Summer Mallows produce an enormous amount of bloom, starting in July and continuing right up until the first winter frosts. They grow to a height of 5-6 feet and will spread around 4-5 feet. All they need in the way of care is a liquid feed now and then and pruning back hard to 12-15 inches each March. This collection of pot grown plants consists of one of each of: 'Maritima' (pink/red bicolor), 'Candy Floss' (light vibrant pink), and 'Burgundy Wine' (deep purplered). Ideal for both borders and in patio pots these plants will guarantee you a wonderful blaze of colour for just £10.95 inc p&p for three.

How to order

Spalding (01775) 762345 for enquiries and 24 hour credit card order service OR

Fill in coupon quoting your Access/Visa/Mastercard number or send with crossed cheque/PO. NO CASH please, to:

THE INDEPENDENT LAVATERA OFFER, P.O. BOX 50, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE11 3SX

Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Offer subject to availability and UK mainland readers only.

Offer closes 22/05/98.

Reg. In England 1800887 Newspaper Publishing plc.

Please send me _____ Pack(s) at £10.95 each

I enclose my cheque/PO (address on back) made payable to: Newspaper Publishing (NG) Ltd, or please debit my Access/Visa/Mastercard account with the sum of £_____

My card number is: _____

Please use BLOCK CAPITALS. Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Orders to THE INDEPENDENT LAVATERA OFFER

PO BOX 50, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE11 3SX.

Please for the best 2 year do not miss to receive future mailings from NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC. (NG) Ltd

NGS, PLC is an exempt company registered by NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC. (NG) Ltd

This distinctive characteristic has become well known in the world of athletics since she emerged as a major talent

Fifty years ago, the oddities of Emil Zatopek's modus operandi provoked similar concerns.

Generations of athletics coaches have striven to optimise – and standardise – the technique of their charges.

The golden rules regarding knee lift, hip elevation and running through the line were absorbed and are now being passed on to a younger generation of British runners.

effort to optimise their performance, and who subsequently became injured. The arm action turned out to have been a natural corrective to a misalignment of the hip.

However, when you watch Radcliffe striving for medals you find yourself willing her on, silently urging her to wring the last reserves from her – apparently – draining energy. On one occasion, at last year's

fully five seconds before she recovered, signed an autograph and moved serenely across to the BBC commentary position to give her considered view of the race, the course and her future plans. As she did so her interviewer began nodding vigorously.

ry, at present) by fighting as
ed southpaw. Reed's challenge



New order down at Vicarage Road

Tomorrow's 20,000 sell-out match between Saracens and Newcastle is a watershed in English club rugby, says Chris Hewett

BIG, bigger, biggest. A sell-out crowd of 20,000 will sardine their way into Vicarage Road for tomorrow's irresistible rumble between Saracens and Newcastle and if the record-breaking audience marks a new summit in the fortunes of both clubs - when Michael Lynagh first pitched up at Sarries two years ago, he was in serious danger of mistaking their Southgate clubhouse for the groundsman's hut - it is also a watershed occasion for English domestic rugby. The old Bath-Leicester plutocracy is dead and buried. Here comes everybody.

As recently as last Christmas, anyone found publicly peddling the possibility of a 15,000-plus crowd for an Allied Dunbar Premiership game featuring neither of the two traditional warhorses would have been dismissed as a screwball or given a seat on the Rugby Football Union's management board, which amounts to the same thing. The sight of Wasps, the reigning champions, struggling to attract a quorum of supporters to Loftus Road for perfectly marketable Heineken Cup matches reinforced the ancient regime in its view that free-spending club investors were flirting dangerously with the economics of the madhouse.

But the last three months or so have witnessed a sea change in the public perception of Premiership rugby - and not only in the union strongholds of the West Country and the East Midlands, either. Newcastle, a team gasping for the oxygen of exposure in a city where football is not only God but the Son and the Holy Ghost as well, crammed 8,000 souls into their 5,000-capacity Kingston Park venue for the game with Saracens last month and they will relocate to the much larger Gateshead stadium for the forthcoming visits of Bath and Leicester. Business is booming with a capital BOOM.

"We're starting to become a focal point for the north-east and while most of us can still safely embark on a shopping trip without having to sign a thousand autographs, we're definitely beginning to feel part of what is a fantastic sporting community," said



Michael Lynagh (left) and Rob Andrew, the rival outside-halves, will be involved in the last skirmish of a compelling personal conflict



Photographs Peter Cook David Hewitson

Two sporting revolutions: How they compare

The "Hard Yards" factor
Newcastle may have earned themselves a reputation as the Premiership's strong-arm bully brigade, but Saracens have a clear edge in the "dump and grind" area. Roberto Crotti and Paul Wallace are scrumming more effectively than Nick Popplewell and Paul Van Zandvliet and while Dottie Wells' insatiable appetite for big-time rugby continues to underline his status as the most effective all-round lock in European rugby, Gareth Archer's drop in form gives the Londoners parity at the line-out, especially as they can call on Tony Diprose's athleticism in the last-gunner's role.

The "Flash Harry" factor
The Saracens back division has a more cosmopolitan feel to it than Carlos Santana's percussion section, but for all its southern hemisphere influence - not to mention a certain Philippe Sella - it does not quite stack up against Newcastle's muscular finishing machine. The Naylor-Underwood combination gives the Falcons contrasting potency on the wings and they possess a sheet iron midfield, thanks to Tait and Tuigamala's streetwise operation of a defensive strategy straight out of rugby league. Any side able to marginalise a talent of Tim Stimpson magnitude must be useful.

The "Mastermind" factor
Andrew and Lynagh, Lynagh and Andrew. The rival outside-halves were born 10 months apart in 1963 and have been doppelganging each other ever since. Lynagh place-kicking Andrew to defeat in the 1991 World Cup final, Andrew drop-goaling Lynagh into Test retirement in the last eight of the 1995 tournament. And still, there is barely a fag paper between them. Andrew plays the more physical game, Lynagh the more fluid, but in the big-money areas of goal-kicking and tactical awareness, they remain superglued together. The last skirmish in a compelling personal conflict.

The "Moneybags" factor
Take two deadbeat clubs in two unfashionable rugby areas, throw in two mighty wallets and what do you get? Two sporting revolutions. Sir John Hall and Nigel Wray have matched each other cheque for cheque and their dynamism has left Cliff Brittle, the Rugby Football Union chairman, looking like a cross between King Canute and Tyrannosaurus Rex - or, in his case, tyrant-osaurus rex. Again, the Andrew-Lynagh link is central; Hall's reinvention of Newcastle began with his recruitment of England's golden boy while Wray set things rolling by sweet-talking the Australian equivalent.

The "Desire" factor
Newcastle have triumphed by a single score at Bath, Leicester, Northampton and Gloucester this season and in the context of English club rugby, there can be no more persuasive evidence of their psychological durability. When the Falcons go to war, the backward step is not an option. Until recently, their rivals' mindset seemed fragile by comparison, but Francois Pienaar has now imposed his death or glory Springbok ethic on the Londoners' dressing room. Given the choice of meeting either Pienaar or Dean Ryan on a rugby field, it might be easier to emigrate.

Twickenham in three weeks' time. The reality is very different, however. "The Premiership will be gone if we lose tomorrow and while we would still have the cup to play for, we would be in the testing position of having to win it from a low point in terms of morale," pointed out the Saracens captain, Tony Diprose, whose direct rivalry with Ryan will again be spiced by their private tug-of-war over the England No 8 shirt. "If we win, we will still need another team to do us a favour. But the more anxious we can leave Newcastle feeling about their final four games, the better. It will be close, just like last time."

Newcastle's 30-25 victory last month hardly made it onto the charge sheet under the "daylight robbery" heading - after all, they outscored Saracens by three tries to one - but they made only sporadic sorties behind enemy lines that night and similar territorial deficiencies at Gloucester last Saturday indicated that their one-paced pack might be running out of four-star. "We didn't see the ball for the best part of 40 minutes at Kingsholm," Ryan admitted. "But we still squeezed the result by taking the few opportunities that came our way and if we're equally clinical tomorrow, we'll give ourselves some elbow room. Rather than have Sarries scrapping us all the way to the last day of the season."

Saracens will start the contest with the same 15 who proved too strong and, dare we say it, too cultured for Bath at the Recreation Ground on Good Friday. That means another start for Ben Sturman alongside Diprose and Francois Pienaar in a beautifully balanced back row and if the formidably powerful newcomer leaves his calling card on a few Geordie ribcages, he may well find himself accompanying England on this summer's tour of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Newcastle, meanwhile, will delay naming their side for as long as possible: aches, pains and muscle strains affecting Rob Andrew, Va'auga Tuigamala and Stuart Legge, among others, have left the publishers of tomorrow's match programme stranded in the land of supposition. Tuigamala, who "copped a call" in the opening five minutes of the Gloucester match but stayed on until the bitter end, is the most serious doubt and there is a strong possibility that Joany Wilkinson, the youngest England cap in aconis, will see his learning curve take another sharp deflection towards the vertical.

Cornishmen beef up county show

A SIGN of the times? The Twickenham vicinity plays host to three contrasting games this afternoon - the Harlequins-Leicester Premiership match, the Women's Cup final featuring Saracens and Wasps and the County Championship decider between Gloucestershire and Cornwall - and two of them have attracted live television coverage, writes Chris Hewett.

Interestingly enough, given the views of some of the Rugby Football Union's more outspoken power-brokers, the county showpiece is the odd one out.

It is entirely understandable that the Sky Sports program-

mers should keep their eggs in the Premiership basket; the Quins match may not have a bearing on the destination of the Allied Dunbar title, but the mere presence at The Stoop of Zinzin Brooke and Dean Richards, the rival coaches, will allow the talking heads to jaw themselves to distraction. But the broadcasters' enthusiasm for the women's match puts the decline of county rugby into stark relief.

So too does the fact that Gloucestershire, champions in 1950 and 1961, will be cheered on - or, rather, whimpered on - by fewer than 500 travelling supporters. County officials in the

North-west have been forced to cancel coach transport through lack of interest and even though 25,000 Cornishmen plan to undertake the traditional pilgrimage along the M3 and M4, Twickenham will almost certainly be less than half full. Indeed, were it not for the involvement of Cornwall, the last keepers of the county flame, the stadium would be less than a quarter full.

It is a far cry from the high days and holidays of the mid-1980s, when county rugby galvanised passions on a nationwide scale. Gloucestershire's comprehensive dismantling of Somerset in the 1984

final, played out before a record crowd, made such an impression on the England selectors that they took five of the victorious pack on the summer tour of South Africa. Today, Clive Woodward would have trouble recognising five of the 30 players on view.

Happily, another traditional foundation stone of British rugby, Pontypool RFC, may be on the road to recovery after a calamitous collapse in fortunes. A seven-man consortium led by Eddie Butler, the former Welsh No 8 and captain, will run "Pooler" from the end of this season following agreement with the club trustees.

Butler, who played alongside Terry Cobner, Jeff Squire and the hallowed "Vet Gwent" in the great Pontypool side of the late 1970s and early 1980s before graduating to rugby journalism and broadcasting, has persuaded several local businessmen to throw their financial weight behind the takeover. Tony Simons, the club secretary, confirmed yesterday that all assets and liabilities had been signed over to the new group.

Pontypool were knock-out finalists as recently as 1991 but are now fighting a rearguard action against relegation from the Welsh First Division.

THE Welsh Rugby Union is to hold an inquiry into Wales's dismal Five Nations Championship campaign. They finished third but suffered crushing defeats by England and the Grand Slam winners, France, which raised questions over the future of their coach, Kevin Bowring, with the World Cup only 18 months away.

Although Bowring, Wales' first full-time professional coach on a salary of about £50,000 a year, has a contract that will take him through to the finals in Welsh finals next year, there is increasing speculation about his future.

The WRU secretary, Dennis

Gethin, said yesterday: "The technical committee meet next week and will discuss the Five Nations campaign. That will then be considered by the general committee early next month."

Bowring's three-year spell has produced only four championship wins in 12 matches plus three defeats by Australia and one each by South Africa and New Zealand.

Welsh clubs are considering cutting their costs by accepting a ceiling on expenditure on their players. "The figure will be based on 65 per cent of anticipated income from all sources," the WRU

chairman, Glamorgan Griffiths, said. "The principle of a salary cap has been accepted by the eight Premier Division clubs."

Cardiff's dispute with the Union over signing a 10-year loyalty agreement will now be heard in the High Court on 9 November.

Bristol, bottom of the Allied Dunbar Premiership One, and Bristol Rovers, the Second Division football club, are to form a company to secure the future of the Memorial Ground. The ground will be sold to a new company called the Memorial Stadium Company for £2.3m, with the company jointly owned by Rovers and Bristol.

All we saw of the chubby drug cheat was a moving mountain of minders



CHRIS MAUME
ON TV

BILL SHANKLY knew about foreigners. He believed that all Europeans were "thieves, rogues and vagabonds, living in the gutter." And when his Liverpool side and their fans travelled to the continent in the early days, according to supporter John Jones, "We were all war babies, and it felt like we were going to do a sortie."

Tommy Smith had the usual footballer's reaction to expeditions abroad: "It was four walls and a fellow telling you can't have coffee 'cause he hasn't got any." Nice to see that travel broadened the mind even back then. When Liverpool won the 1984 European Cup final in Rome, Bob Paisley remarked: "The last time I was in Rome I was in a 10-ton truck. We beat the Germans then and we beat them tonight."

Being teetotal, he was unable to celebrate in the traditional manner. "There are only two sober men in Rome tonight," he said, "me and the Pope."

All this was part of Liverpool in Europe, in Channel Four's Easter theme night on all things Scouse. As a Manchester United fan, I watched with mixed emotions: the grainy footage was evocative, and in the early days they won nothing, but it was painful to watch their transition under Paisley from a cavalier, attack-minded outfit to the canny operators who could kill a game off like seasoned assassins. Still, a 3-0 defeat to Internazionale was good to see, especially with one fan confessing to kicking the ref as he left the field.

If Tommy Smith was the archetype of the old-school

pro, Gary Lineker is virtually the template for the new breed, comfortable when surrounded by Johnny Foreigner, at home chatting with former presidents.

As England's only winner of the Golden Boot, which goes to the highest scorer in each World Cup final, Lineker was the obvious choice to front a new series on the history of the tournament. The first Gary Lineker's Golden Boots (BBC1) saw him in Argentina, talking to a survivor of the first final, in 1930, then whizzing ahead to 1978, when Mario Kempes won it for the generals.

It was surprising to see Lineker addressing the two controversial issues from that tournament - the bread-and-circus element, distracting attention from the oppression and torture,

and that notorious victory over Peru. After a round of golf, the former president, Carlos Menem, told Lineker that he experienced the 78 World Cup from inside a prison cell as a political prisoner, while Kempes said he felt no pressure from the regime. "We had nothing to do with politics," he said, emitting the sportsman's mantra for when such questions arise. Yes you did, Mario. You just didn't realise it. Twenty years on, Kempes and the 78 captain, Daniel Passarella, were both indignant when asked about the 6-0 win over Peru that put Argentina into the next stage. "Only we know the sacrifices we had to make to win the World Cup," Passarella said, while, for Kempes, the conspiracy theorists "are insulting the whole nation."

The programme as a whole was a pleasant surprise for an old curmudgeon like me who resents Lineker for his anodyne charm. Unlike his work as an anchorman, when he sometimes looks ill at ease, transfixed by the autocrat, he looked at home. (He tried to get hold of Diego Maradona at some function or other, but we saw of the chubby drug cheat was a moving mountain of minders carving past.) Matters were helped by a literate script from Stan Hey, who wrote *Smiler*, the series based on Lineker's Barcelona sojourn. I came to Gary Lineker's Golden Boots ready to deliver a critical Golden Kicking, but was frustrated by an intelligent, entertaining half-hour. Damn.

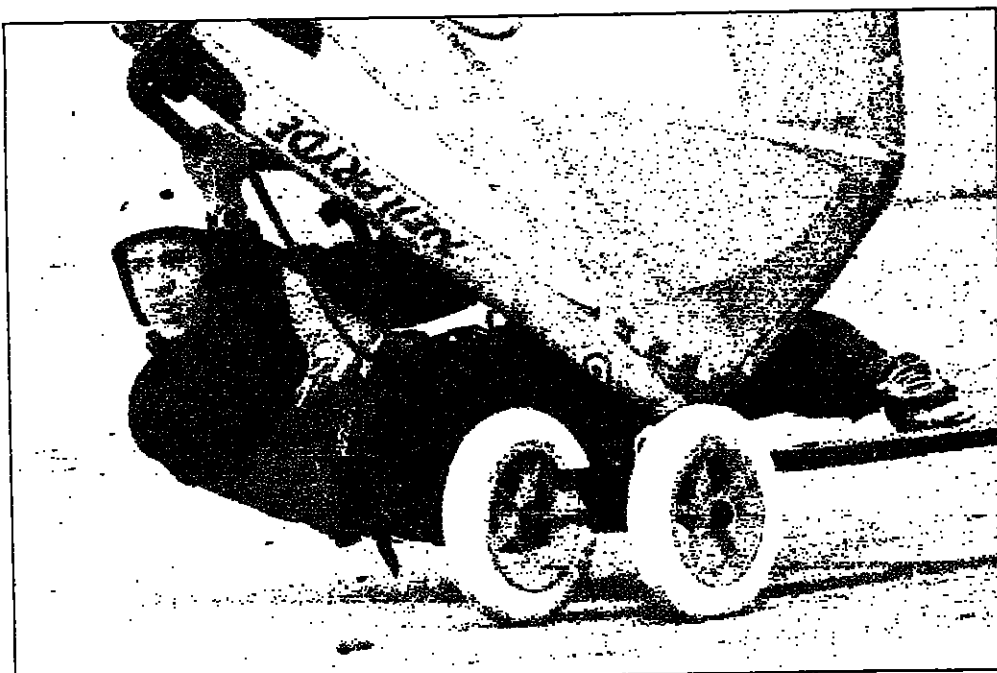
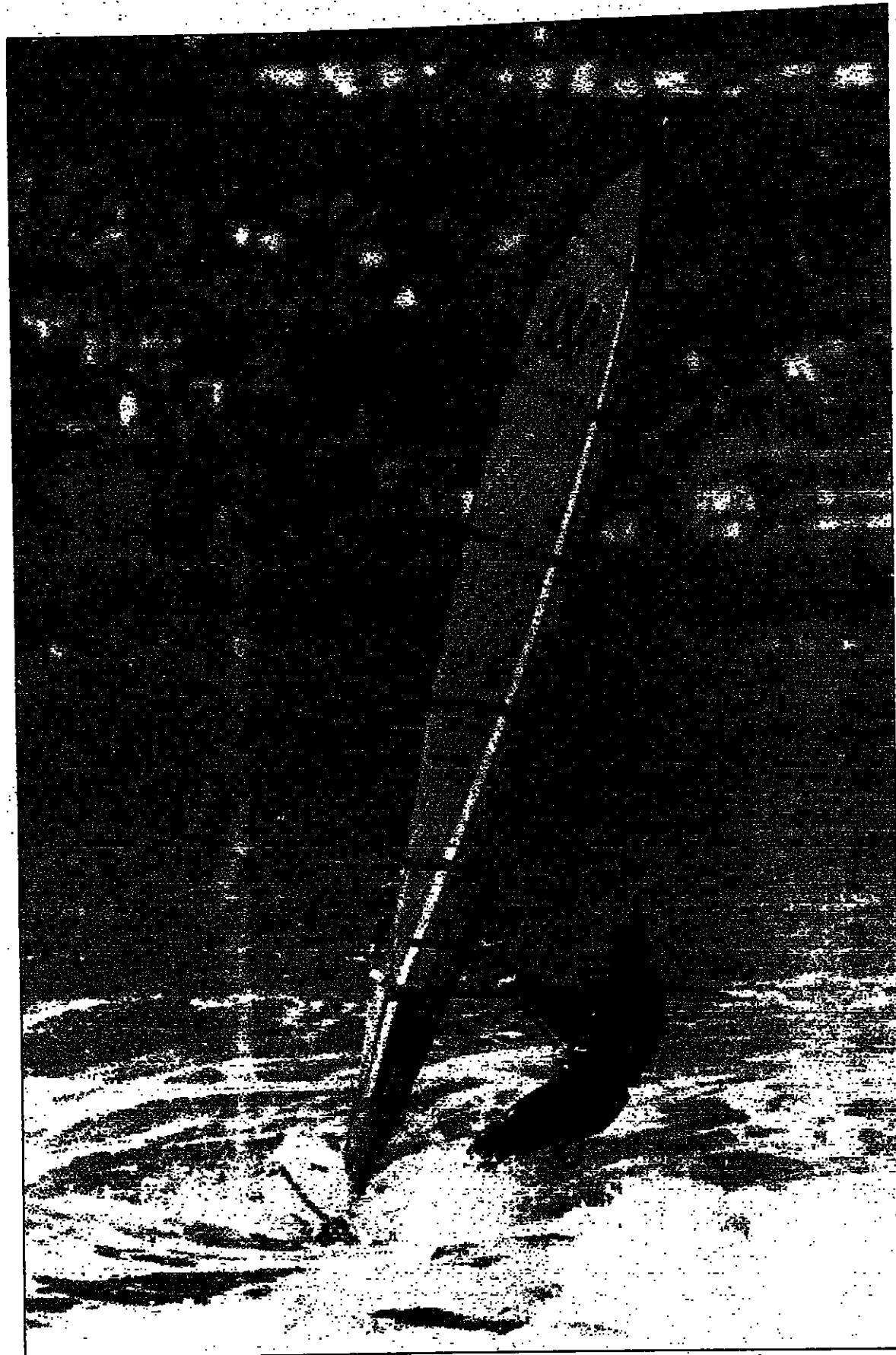
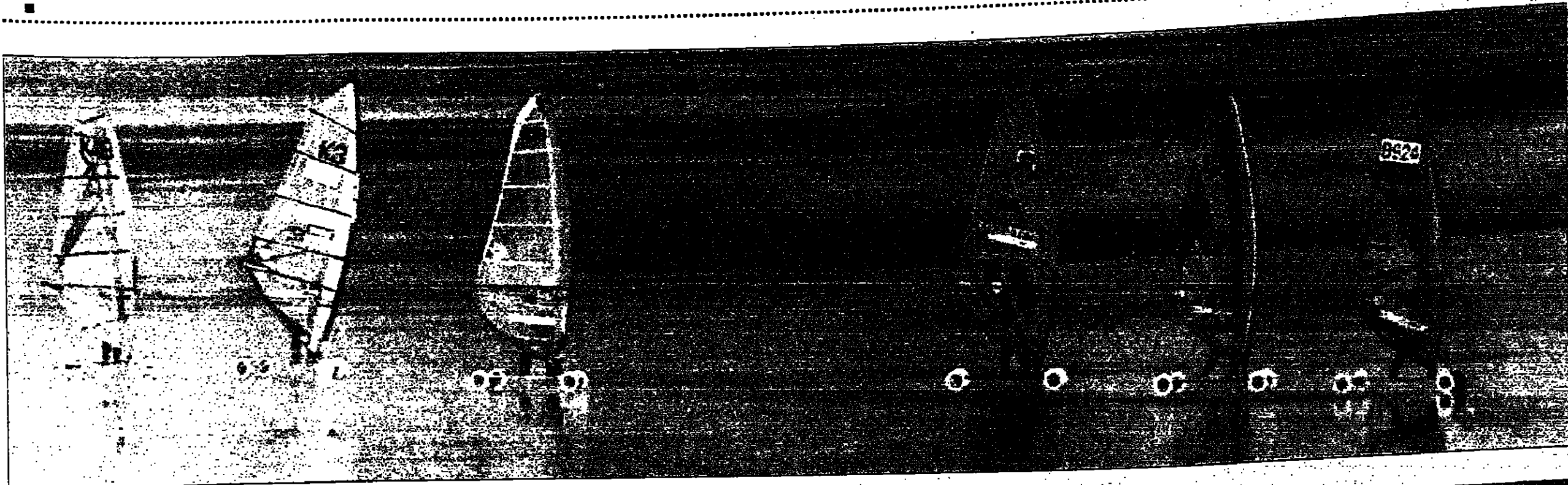
There was raw meat to be chewed up and spat out, though.

in *The Mission: Ice Cool In Japan* (BBC1), which followed the British bobsleigh team for the three months leading up to the Olympic Games. It was the cliché-ridden script that let the programme down most, while the narrator, Robert Lindsay, seemed to feel the need to lend an air of gravitas with his portentous delivery.

A big problem was that anyone who might have the remotest interest in watching a documentary about bobsleigh racing might just have noticed that there was a competition going in Nagano not so long ago, and that Our Brave Boys took home Britain's only medal. So the attempt to create suspense were futile and unnecessary.

The other caveat is that, as with wildlife films, we must sur-

vey be reaching the limit of how many fly-on-the-wall documentaries we can take. Even sticking to sport there's a surfeit, with the Lions film last week, a multi-part series on the Benetton Formula One team, the Bath rugby series last year and the recent Premier Passions - to name only the ones that come most immediately to mind. Perhaps to spare us some of it, they should combine the genres - Easter Monday's (emissions) documentary, for example, could have been shown instead of *Premier Passions*, which depicted Sunderland hurling themselves over the cliff into the Nationwide League. Or John Inverdale might be persuaded to go off and do a video diary in a particularly remote part of the Amazon. Now that would be a result.

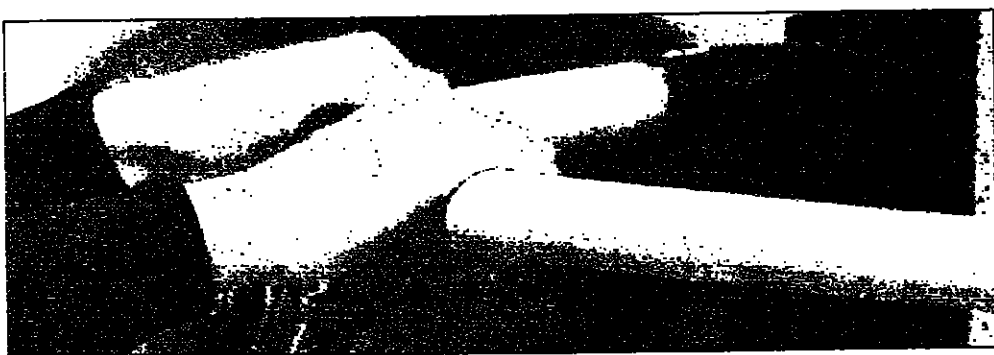


Power of the wind

THE weather may not have been ideal, but this week's rain and wind failed to dampen the enthusiasm of those taking part in the Renault Scenic International Sand and Surf Festival held on the beautiful Gwithian Beach in St Ives Bay, Cornwall. The event has been running all week and finishes tomorrow.

Among the competitors has been Lee Bartlett, Britain's three-times surfing champion, who is aiming to compete in the world championships in Portugal later this year.

Two of the main disciplines have been windsurfing and sand yachting, with the same sail used for both events. One of the highlights of the festival is a "surf triathlon", in which competitors speedsail, windsurf and finally surf, running between disciplines as they attempt to beat the clock.



PHOTOGRAPHS
BY
DAVID
ASHDOWN



Mrs Entwistle solves the sleeping arrangements



THE
GAFFER
TAPES

THANK Heaven for Mrs Entwistle. I don't know how England or myself would have managed without her. We could have even blown our World Cup chances. As it is we're back on track and, when Glenn's brave boys meet up tomorrow night, everyone should be sorted.

It all started when Glenn picked so many players in his squad - and insisted they all turn up. Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those complaining managers - although it is unfortunate that Shaun Prone and Duane Spice, our only English qualified first-teamers, will both pull hamstring late in today's match. No, I'm right behind Glenn, he's a lot on his plate and it's no wonder he never thought to consider if the team hotel had enough rooms for 34 players - plus his coaching and support staff.

It hasn't. Honestly, the trouble it's caused me, in my role as England Team Assistant, trying to arrange the

accommodation. It's hard enough anyway, at this stage of the season you have to be so careful.

Just imagine, Gary Neville gets up in the middle of the night to answer a call of nature, he trips over Ray Parlour's kit-bag, which has been left in the middle of the room, and sprains his ankle. Fergie would go potty, he'd be saying Arsène had put Parlour up to it. And what if Rob Lee went back to Newcastle saying that Darren Anderton's snoring had kept him awake for three nights and he was too tired to play at White Hart Lane next week. Even cheerful old Kenny might not see the funny side of that.

So Arsenal and Manchester United players must be kept apart, Spurs and Newcastle likewise. The Arsenal boys are a real problem. They obviously can't share with Spurs and the FA Cup final's too close to put them with Newcastle. Fortunately we can now put Tony Adams with Paul Merson,

there was a time when we had to put them at opposite ends of the hotel in case they were tempted to have a bit of a session.

Parlour's a bit of a "new man" as well now so we were going to put him in with Merse and Toney on a roll-away bed. As an uncapped player he's first choice for that sort of thing but we've had to abandon the idea. Glenn wants to be fair to everybody and that meant the other uncapped players also had to be on roll-aways. Not a problem with Dominic Matteo, he was in with Macca and Jamie, but Kevin Pressman on a roll-away bed? No, I didn't think so either. But John Gorman insisted so we gave it a go. Bad idea, the hotel manager was very good about it but there's still a bill on the way to the FA.

It's not just the players either. The masseur, the physio and the doctor need extra rooms to work in while Eileen, the faith healer, has to have the rooms above, below and to the

side left vacant so her work isn't affected by negative energy (if she means Ian Wright's ghetto blaster I can't say I blame her). Altogether we were six rooms short.

That's when I remembered Mrs Entwistle. She used to run some digs for me when I managed Blackfarm Rovers before she moved south and opened a guesthouse in Windsor. Well, the cold snap's deterred the tourists so she had enough spare rooms to look after the rest of the team. They're a lucky half-dozen, too, they'll get a full cooked breakfast, none that porry muesli and yogurt Glenn insists on.

Meanwhile, back at the Old Cornfield, we're suing the local press. They've carried a series of reports linking Leroy Ganja with Manchester United and it's beginning to affect his form. Now, I saw in a recent *World Soccer* that Dynamo Kiev successfully sued a Ukrainian paper for claiming Milan were after

Andrei Shevchenko. The club said this put pressure on a young player before very some important matches and sought damages. They won £129,000 so we're suing the *Sludgehorpe Advertiser* and *Sludge Times* for £1m each. That should put them out of business which serves them right, the *Advertiser* has been running a campaign against me for weeks while the *Times* carried a picture of me which showed my bald spot.

The Ukrainians apparently gave the money to charity. Obviously we'll look into doing the same... maybe. It's been such a busy week with paperwork I've hardly been on the training pitch at all - not necessarily a bad thing when it's snowing. I did see Ivor Niggle bruise a rib sliding into the groundstaff's snowman, however, so he's out today. Shaun Prone starts, but, like Savo in front of goal, won't finish.

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore.

SIDELINES

Graham hands referees a warning

NEVER one to hold back when venting his frustration on referees, the Leeds United manager, George Graham, was yesterday counselling them to keep their cool during what is certain to be a heated end to the season.

Graham fears the officials could deal a run band to those clubs with much at stake over the next few weeks. He experienced what he describes as "over-reaction" during last week's 2-0 defeat at relegation-threatened Everton.

Graham felt Utah Rennie "lost the plot" during the first-half at Goodison Park, sending off Lucas Radebe and handing out five other bookings - which left the Sheffield referee with no leeway for the rest of the match.

Leeds, pushing for a UEFA Cup place, travel to another side deep in trouble in Bolton today in what is just

one of a number of critical games as the season draws to an end.

He said: "Over the last few weeks of the season there are some very important matches for some teams, whether they are fighting for their lives, going for titles or trying to qualify for Europe."

"Referees are well aware of that and I would just ask them not to over-react because there's a lot at stake. I don't think the behaviour of the players is as bad as some referees anticipate."

"They think to themselves: 'We must take a tight grip on the game' and that's what happened to us at Everton last week. The referee [Rennie] anticipated a difficult game, but it was not the case. I think he over-reacted and now I hope it doesn't happen to us and other teams over these last few matches."

Comic book needs happy ending

Victory over Vicenza will take its place in Chelsea folklore. Mike Rowbottom reports.

FULHAM BROADWAY station erupted into song late on Thursday night as passengers on both platforms responded lustily to the urging of two fans brandishing a giant Chelsea scarf.

After seeing their team reach the European Cup-Winners' Cup final with a recovery that will take its place in Stamford Bridge folklore, the home supporters appeared ready to party all the way to the final in Stockholm on 13 May.

Chelsea's opponents there, VfB Stuttgart, had better beware of one thing - if they score early, they could be in trouble.

It took the goal which put Vicenza 2-0 up on aggregate to concentrate Chelsea's collective mind. Their fitfulness is the one continuing concern of their player-manager Gianluca Vialli.

"The only problem we have got is that we can't play all the time at the same level," he said, after giving a truly inspirational performance which included the sublimely-directed cross which enabled his colleague Gianfranco Zola to level the aggregate scores.

Chelsea's problem is one which most other teams would love to have. Three finals - FA Cup, Coca-Cola Cup and European Cup-Winners' Cup - in the space of less than a year is testament to their exhilarating ability. But Vialli wants to amend that record to three cup victories.

"In Europe at the moment they think we are a good side," he said. "But the only way to be really respected is to win something, and it would dramatically change our image in Europe to win this competition."

Vialli was generous in his praise of Mark Hughes, whose goal six minutes after his arrival as a 70th-minute substitute put Chelsea in a position to further



Gianluca Vialli and Gianfranco Zola help Mark Hughes celebrate his storybook Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final winner

Photograph: David Ashdown

raise their European profile. At the age of 34, Hughes showed the same explosive sharpness in front of goal which he displayed in earning Manchester United the European Cup-Winners' Cup seven years earlier.

"I want to thank Mark," Vialli said. "He scored a great goal, and he's a warrior when he plays. He's never let me down."

The warrior could have been excused leaving the field of battle on a shield after being whacked senseless by an Italian elbow. "I didn't know who hit me but I've never been hit as hard in my life," Hughes said. "It was only the adrenalin which kept me going."

The angled volley which Hughes finally killed off a hugely capable - and at times, hugely unlucky - Italian side was the kind of goal he has been scoring all his life. But this, he acknowledged, was one of the special ones.

"I've scored a few important goals in my career," he said. "Hopefully people will remember that one for a few years to come."

Vicenza's manager, Francesco Guidolin, will probably remember it to his dying day. While history - in the form of televised snippets - will reduce this match to one surging fight-back after an early setback, the

truth was that Chelsea lived dangerously at the back from the first minute to the last. And the visitors might easily have had three goals themselves had not fortune, or the burly home custodian Ed de Goey, taken a hand.

But such is Chelsea's potency going forward that - thus far in the competition at least - they have overcome such shortcomings. It is comic book stuff, and it deserves to be treasured.

"We touched the final with one hand, but not both," Guidolin reflected ruefully.

It was a disconsolate occasion for the Italians - apart, that is, from Vialli and the beaming

little figure of Zola, whose performance was hugely more impressive than that of the first leg.

On that occasion he had been obliged to play a wide role. At Stamford Bridge, he flourished in a freer, more central position, tipping the tie with a gloriously certain header.

Are you watching, Cesare Maldini? Zola was hopeful that the Italian manager was - and that he would also be watching the final.

So the District Line trains pulled out of Fulham Broadway on the night of Chelsea's glorious comeback. "If you're all going to Stockholm, clap your hands," someone shouted.

Many voices responded again. Those dizzy days of 1971, when Osgood and Co took this trophy in Athens - they're back.

● The Premier League has turned down Chelsea's request to bring forward their last Premiership fixture of the season - a home match against Bolton - from Sunday 10 May to help preparations for the European Cup-Winners' Cup final.

The BBC has won the exclusive rights to screen the European Cup-Winners' Cup final between Chelsea and VfB Stuttgart next month, pipping Channel 5, which has followed the west London club since the first round of the tournament.

Shunned Harkes is left out in the cold

United States

THE national team coach, Steve Sampson, caused a major surprise this week when he announced that his team captain John Harkes, one of the most experienced American players, will not play in the World Cup finals in June.

Sampson told reporters he had dropped Harkes - a veteran of the 1990 and 1994 World Cups who has played 90 times for the United States - because of a combination of poor play and unspecified "leadership issues."

Sampson declined to go into details about the question of leadership from a player who has been the heart and soul of the US team for eight years and has led Washington DC United to two consecutive Major League Soccer titles.

"Out of respect for an individual who has performed so well [in the past] and contributed so much to US soccer, he deserves the right for our conversation to remain private," Sampson said. He added that, although Harkes had accepted Sampson's decision to play him in recent games at left-back rather than in midfield, he felt the player "did not embrace the decision."

"The national team must play as a unit and understand that," he said. Asked about Harkes' reaction when he told him he would not be going to France, Sampson said: "Enormous disappointment. But John realizes there are things in his game he needed to improve."

Harkes, who has extensive experience in the English game with Sheffield Wednesday and Derby County, said he hoped Sampson would reconsider.



AROUND
THE
WORLD
BY
RUPERT
METCALF

"Ultimately, it is Steve Sampson's decision to make and I respect that," he said. "But I plan to prove to him that I belong on the team - if he is

willing to keep an open mind and give me that chance."

Sampson, however, said it was "doubtful" he would change his mind and suggested Harkes' place is likely to be taken by Chad Deering, who has played only six times for the United States but is performing well in the German *Bundesliga* with Wolfsburg.

Another *Bundesliga* player who is in Sampson's plans is David Regis, a 29-year-old Martinique-born Frenchman who is married to an American woman and is a defender with Karlsruhe. "He has not received his citizenship," Sampson said, "but we are very hopeful that he will be available before we leave for France."

The 37-year-old Thomas Dooley, who grew up in Germany as the son of an American soldier he never knew, is likely to be the new captain.

Jamaica

DANNY MADDOX, the Queen's Park Rangers defender, has become the eighth English-born player to be called up to Jamaica's World Cup squad by the Brazilian-born coach, Rene Simoes. Maddox, who has Jamaican parents, is due to make his international debut this weekend in a four-nation tournament in Iran.

Ecuador

BARCELONA, not the Spanish club but a side from Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil, lost their gate receipts from this week's Libertadores Cup tie against Chile's Colo Colo - when they were robbed by a gang of men wearing replica team shirts. The amount taken was not specified, but the crowd was 55,000.



53 days
...until
the start
of the
World
Cup finals

ENGLAND may be facing Brazilian opposition in the first round of the finals. Tunisia, who take on Glenn Hoddle's men in Marseilles on 15 June, are ready to call up a Brazilian-born player, José Clayton. The 23-year-old defender, who has played for Ettoile Sportive du Sahel, one of Tunisia's top clubs, for five years, became a citizen of the north African country thanks to a Tunisian justice ministry ruling published on Monday. Henryk Kasperczak, the national coach, has confirmed that Clayton will be "called up for the next training session of the national team." Ettoile Sportive are coached by a Brazilian, Santos, who has guided Clayton's career.

Ten things
that
Motherwell's
Namibian
Elphas
Shivute
might be
missing
today



1 "He'll miss beef," said the lady at the Namibian High Commission. "Real beef, that is. On the bone."

2 "And other meat," she added, salivating. "Game meats and steaks. Oryx, kudu..."

3 "And Etosha National Park." [One of Africa's most beautiful, and no doubt a good place to pick up a bite to eat.]

4 "The sun, the sun."

5 "And the rain. We like rain, but not the way it pours down here."

6 "Beer. Beer of course. Tafel is a popular one."

7 "People being friendly on public transport. Why do people never speak to each other here on trains? They can't all be asleep. In Namibia, you get on the bus and people say hello."

8 "The Fish River Canyon is popular." [160km long, 27km wide and up to 550m deep. You call the Highlands spectacular?]

9 "The dunes and the sea. The scenery."

10 "There's only one TV channel, but there is a popular soap. I can't remember the name."

NAME OF THE GAME

No 31: WIMBLEDON

WIMBLEDON'S youngest supporters, who have only known seen their team play at Selhurst Park following the move from Plough Lane in 1991, might wonder why their club is named after a London suburb many miles away. Delving deeper into history, Wimbledon Old Centrals Football Club was formed in 1889 by old boys from Central School. The name lasted until 1905, when it was changed to plain old Wimbledon.

HISTORY LESSON

AS Manchester United and Newcastle United prepare for their match at Old Trafford today, both teams might like to reflect on their meeting in rather different circumstances at St James' Park just over two years ago.

Newcastle had led the table for almost the whole season, but had started to slip. Their previous two games had seen a 2-0 defeat at West Ham and a 3-3 draw at Manchester City. Manchester United had won five games in a row and were breathing down Newcastle's necks.

Manchester had won their meeting at Old Trafford in December, goals from Andy Cole and Roy Keane earning a 2-0 victory. At St James' Park it was the turn of Eric Cantona to score the only goal of the game and set

United on course for the championship. It proved to be critical for Newcastle, who lost three more of their last 10 games and could only finish runners-up.

Last season Manchester failed to score against Newcastle, who won famously 5-0 at St James' Park in October and fought out a goalless draw at Old Trafford in May.

The 5-0 triumph was Newcastle's first win over Alex Ferguson's team in the Premiership. The 1993-94 season saw two 1-1 draws, a scoreline repeated at St James' Park the following season. When they met at Old Trafford in October 1994 Manchester won 2-0 with goals by Gary Pallister and Keith Gillespie, who later moved to Newcastle in the deal which saw Cole switch to Old Trafford.

THIS WEEK

ON 16 April 1988, Hearts beat Celtic 2-1. Hearts' win consolidated their second position in the Scottish Premier Division behind their opponents.

Rangers, under player-manager Graeme Souness, only managed to draw 1-1 with Hibernian to remain third, ten points adrift of their Old Firm rivals.

The next day, Hearts' prolific striker, John Robertson, ended his seven-year association with the club, joining Newcastle for £750,000. Robertson's departure did not unduly trouble his side, who finished the season second to Celtic.

Rangers finished third, 12 points off the lead. They have won every title since.

Contributors: Phil Shaw, Nick Harris, Paul Newman
Readers' contributions welcome. Send to Sidelines, Sports Desk, The Independent, 1 Canine Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. e-mail address: sport@independent.co.uk

Gross aims to avoid repeat of history

Can Tottenham avoid relegation, which they last suffered more than 20 years ago?
Glenn Moore reports

WHITE HART LANE, the last home game of the season. Tottenham win but go down regardless. There is a pitch invasion, there are banners and chants about the manager. Nothing unusual in that, except the protests are in his support. He may have led Spurs to relegation in his first season but the fans want him to stay.

An unimaginable scenario, except in Christian Gross's dreams? No. This was the reaction the last time Spurs went down, in 1977. Glenn Hoddle, Pat Jennings and Steve Perryman were in the team. Spurs had conceded 92 goals in the season, including eight at Derby and five at Manchester City and West Ham, yet Keith Burkinshaw was being lauded.

Should the unthinkable happen and Spurs not only lose at Barnsley today, but also go on to lose their Premiership status, do not expect a repeat. The game has moved on - as the rewards have risen so have the penalties for failure and neither directors, fans nor players show the patience of the past.

This week has been typical of the season with Darren Anderton, David Howells and Chris Armstrong all apparently expressing their frustration with the management. At various times this season a string of players have shown discontent in public or private and one insider this week estimated that 13 of the current squad are unhappy at the club.

This is not the sort of spirit a team engaged in a relegation battle wants. As Peter Taylor, another member of the 1977 side, said earlier this season: "We learned no club has a divine right to a place in the top division. We also learned we had to stick together. The present side have the quality to get out of trouble but they have to recover their confidence and realise the need to stick together and fight as a team. That means running back to retrieve lost situations when they might not otherwise have done."

It does not help that as many as 11 of the squad have their minds on the World Cup and several significant players also know they are unlikely to be at the club next season. Jürgen Klinsmann is definitely off. Nicola Berti has yet to be offered a contract. Sol Campbell is rumoured to be Arsenal-bound, a number of major players have escape clauses in their contracts and others, such as Howells, Justin Edinburgh and Jose Dominguez, are unlikely to stay if Gross does. It would have been helpful to check the most significant of these probable departures, that of Campbell's, with the player but, though team captain, he refused to be interviewed.

Throughout all the dissent and defeats Gross, who was a promising midfielder with Lausanne when Spurs were last relegated, has re-



Echoes of the past? Tottenham fans philosophically accept their fate in 1977 (left) while Christian Gross, the current coach, contemplates another defeat.



Photographs: Kent Gavin; Dale Cherry

tained a dignified resolve. It was no different on Thursday as the press gathered at the club's plush new Chigwell training complex (now virtually finished after almost as many problems as the team) to pick over the latest entrails.

Gross, to his credit, never ducks a question though he can provide an obtuse answer - sometimes, but not always, because of the language barrier. Unlike some managers he is prepared to explain tactical decisions and does not belittle questions.

Of Armstrong, who stormed off when substituted against Coventry on Monday, he said: "I can understand if players are not happy when they are taken off but I was not happy with his performance. There aren't problems between us. He is very ambitious and I like ambitious players like him. Darren Anderton and David Howells."

Anderton is unhappy at not starting and being overlooked as substitute when Moussa Saib was injured early in Monday's match. "I have to be careful with Anderton," said Gross. "He has had a lot of injury problems, he has to be patient. I could not bring him on for Saib as it was at the start of the game. He is fit to play but not for 90 minutes. I do not want, after any game this season, to say he is injured again. He had a full game in the reserves this week but there is a big difference between that

and the Premiership, especially the fight it will be at Barnsley."

Of Howells, who is unhappy at being left out and is not even in the 18 for today's game, Gross said: "He also had injury problems so I brought in Berti, who is more or less the same player." Gross has also preferred Colin Calderwood, a regular in Scotland's near-impenetrable defence, to Howells in midfield. "He gives me more security," explained Gross, though Tottenham fans feel the Scot would be better played in defence in place of Ramon Vega.

Vega not only chips in with important goals but is unwaveringly loyal to his compatriot manager. Unfortunately, Vega is responsible for conceding more goals than he scores. Unused to playing in a back four, he has regularly been caught

out and his continued selection smacks of favouritism, which never helps team spirit. Not that Vega is a bad player; witness his performance for Switzerland against an England attack of Alan Shearer and Michael Owen. But then he had Stuttgart's Murat Yakin sweeping behind him, at Tottenham there is just space.

Playing Vega also means leaving out John Scales and Gary Mabbutt, who, with Howells, is seen as providing the fighting heart of the club. Then there is the playing of Allan Nielsen at left-back. This is a result of selling the promising Jamie Clapham, failing to buy Andy Hinchcliffe and falling out with Justin Edinburgh and Dean Austin, leaving no cover when Clive Wilson was injured.

Not that Gross is even primarily responsible for Spurs' situation. In-

deed, since he took over in November results have improved, with 23 points coming from 19 games compared to 13 points from 15 before his arrival. The real problems go back much further, with many fans dating the current struggles back to Irving Scholar's ill-fated attempt to commercialise the club in the mid-1980s - how ironic it will be if Scholar goes up with Nottingham Forest as Tottenham go down.

Though Spurs still run out to the lyrics "Tottenham are the greatest team the world has ever seen", the reality is different. They have not won the championship since 1961 and have only won one trophy, the 1991 FA Cup, in 14 years. They have pretensions to be among the European elite yet they have only played one season in Europe in a dozen years.

The reigns of Burkinshaw, David Pleat and Terry Venables all hinted at a return to the glory, glory years of the early 60s but were each undone by boardroom wrangling or scandal. The last few years have been a struggle as Ossie Ardiles and Gerry Francis failed, in differing ways, to balance the fans' desire for stylish football with an equally insistent demand for success. By the time Francis resigned, confidence, sapped by poor results, was low.

Joe Kinnear, of Wimbledon, was in the frame as Francis' replacement. A former Spurs player and disciple of Bill Nicholson, he had the right combination of a feel for the club and a proven record of organizing teams.

However, the example of Arsenal and Chelsea, where foreign managers had brought glamour and success, swayed the club and, after a rebuttal from Ottmar Hitzfeld, who had steered Borussia Dortmund to European Cup triumph, they plucked Gross from the backwater of Swiss football. He was quickly given Klinsmann, billed as a saviour but actually a millstone, but could not get permission to hire Fritz Schmid, his confidante and fitness trainer.

Gross speaks confidently of next season but there must be doubts about his remaining even if Spurs stay up. Alan Sugar, who was selling cheap hi-fi systems in east London when Tottenham were last relegat-

ed, would be keen to avoid having to appoint yet another manager, his fifth in eight years, yet there is also uncertainty about his continued commitment. He has often talked about stepping aside if he is not successful and may soon do so to allow his son, Daniel, to take over. This could open the door to either Kinnear or Raddy Antic, a former protégé of David Pleat, Spurs' Director of Football, who is soon to finish a successful spell at Atletico Madrid.

Gross' fate would surely be sealed by relegation even if, as in 1977, the fault is not all his. Then the previous manager, Terry Neill, a former Arsenal player whose Spurs team was unadventurous, was blamed by fans for a relegation which ended 27 years in the top flight.

The following season Spurs were never out of the three automatic promotion places and, despite a late wobble, they regained elite status.

Whatever happens, changes must lie ahead. As Arsenal chase a second double the glory, glory days of Spurs' historic brace are now so distant as to be ancient history. How curious that one of the game's supposedly wealthy glamour clubs has not won the title since the days of the maximum wage. But then, it is not all about money, as Barnsley, who were in the old Fourth Division the last time Spurs went down, hope to show today.

Tottenham: More caps than points (and that's just Klinsmann)

FULL INTERNATIONALS

Ian Walker England
Frode Grodas Norway
Colin Calderwood Scotland
Ramon Vega Switzerland
John Scales England
Sol Campbell England
Gary Mabbutt England
Nicola Berti Italy
Allan Nielsen Denmark

Darren Anderton England
Moussa Saib Algeria
Jose Dominguez Portugal
David Ginola France
Andy Sinton England
Les Ferdinand England
Jürgen Klinsmann Germany

OTHER INTERNATIONALS
Espen Baardsen Norway U-21
Stephen Carr Ireland U-21

Ruel Fox England U-21
Steffen Iversen Norway U-21
Chris Armstrong England U-21

NON-INTERNATIONALS
Justin Edinburgh
Dean Austin
Clive Wilson
David Howells
Stephen Clemence
Garry Brady

Money makes its mark on Welsh game

LIKE every season past and every season future, this one will throw up its fair share of winners and losers.

It has yet to reveal, of course, the winners of the biggest prize of all, but among those who will be remembered positively from 1997/98 so far are: last season's Conference champions Nucleusfield, unbeaten as yet at their Moss Rose ground and heading for promotion to Division Two; Notts County, one of the only teams to have secured promotion in March; Halifax, unbeaten at home with one to play and heading for the Nationwide; and Dundee, runaway leaders of the Scottish First Division and invincible anywhere but Dens Park.

But the boot is very much on the other foot for Crystal Palace, who have not won at Selhurst Park for Hibernian, who have failed to win away from Easter Road; for Doncaster, who were Vauxhall Conference-bound by Christmas; and for Cemaes Bay (or Cemaes Ynys Mon to be exact) who play, just about, in the League of Wales.

Cemaes Bay's 'goals against' and 'points for' tally makes Doncaster look championship material - 147 and nine respectively - and it is as certain as Peter Reid swearing again this season that this tiny club

from a tiny village on the northern tip of Anglesey will be playing their football in the Cymru Alliance league next season alongside the likes of Cefn Druids and Mold Alexandra.

Two weeks ago they were thrashed 12-0 by leaders Barry Town; then Newtown and Bangor City rubbed salt in the wound by beating them 11-1 and 6-0 over Easter. A spectator described breaching Cemaes Bay's defence as "as easy as cracking an egg".

Those who disparagingly consider Welsh football to be a contradiction in terms might not be surprised, but you have to feel sympathy for Cemaes Bay's plight. Imagine Blackburn without Jack Walker (and his money) or Fulham without Mohammed Al Fayed's fortune, and you begin to get the picture.

Because Cemaes Bay, aiming to consolidate last season's mid-table position and going along quite nicely, suddenly had their feet pulled from under them when chairman Joe Davis decided to take his money and run; in this case, to league rivals Cwmbran Town.

Unable to pay the wages of even their semi-professional players, Cemaes Bay have had to call upon local amateurs, hence the humiliating scorelines. But what is even more galling for them is that Cwm-



OLIVIA BLAIR

ON A SEASON TO SWIFTLY FORGET FOR CEMAES BAY

bran do not really represent a significantly better investment not like, for instance, pulling out of Manchester City to invest in United.

Sure, they are currently fourth in the league, and played in this season's Cup-Winners' Cup as beaten Welsh Cup finalists (double winners Barry Town were in the European Cup), but the nearest they got to the likes of Chelsea and Stuttgart was in the bag for the draw (they were beaten 5-1 and 8-0 by National Bucharest).

This season they went out of the Welsh Cup at the quarter-final stage (the semi-finals will be contested today), and

were not "invited" to play in this inaugural season of the FAW Invitation Cup. Those who were - Barry Town, Newtown, Conwy United and Bangor City - were selected because they were the four top-placed league sides in 1996/97.

Nevertheless, this Cup - for which the three Welsh Nationwide League clubs plus Merthyr Tydfil of the Dr Martens Premier Division also competed - has been a resounding success. Heavily funded by BBC Wales and worth at least £100,000 (which in Welsh football represents a small fortune) to the winners, it will return as the FAW Premier Cup next season when the number of Welsh League clubs will be increased to eight.

The semi-final second legs are on Tuesday, when Wrexham will defend a 2-0 lead at Newtown and Merthyr will try to peg back four goals at Cardiff. But whether Merthyr will finish the season as winners or losers depends on more than the outcome of their cup run.

Favourites to win the Dr Martens Premier, they face the prospect of being denied promotion to the Vauxhall Conference: having formed a new company at the end of last season to run the existing club and take on debts of around £250,000, Merthyr fall short of the standards set by a "new"

Conference ruling that a new company has to have traded for a full calendar year to take part.

What started off as "rather provocative discussions" between the club and the Conference have apparently eased to the point at which Merthyr are confident of reaching an agreement, but it is not the first time the club have had to fight their corner flag. However, according to League of Wales secretary John Deskin, there is no longer any animosity regarding the choice of Merthyr and fellow Welsh "exiles" Colwyn Bay and Newport to opt out of Wales.

Originally the concern was that Uefa would not recognise the League; having allied that fear, the League is now concerned with finding sponsorship to the tune of £150,000, and is helped in its search by Neville Southall, who now reads the Financial Times to "gen up" on Wales' wealthiest businesses.

One of those - a business in Oswestry - put money into League club Llansantffraid on the condition that the club took on the company name. So Llansantffraid have become, er, Total Network Solutions, in the same way that Inter Cardiff are now known as Inter Cable-Tel. It is proof, as if any is needed, of how loudly money talks in Welsh football.

We can all combat the violence

AFTER the fatal stabbing of a Fulham fan at Gillingham, what should football supporters do now? We hope the tide of violence, which for 10 years has ebbed, is not rising again. But if it is, there will be calls for more police inside grounds, more restriction on our movements and harsher punishment for hooligans. One trusts that ID cards will not be discredited, but the call to bring back fences (still common on the Continent) will not remain dormant if more officials are attacked on the model of incidents at Oakwell and Fratton Park.

These ideas will not work, but they are easy to prescribe, they suit the outlook of the Government, and they will be seen to assist the campaign for the 2006 World Cup. If supporters come up with no alternatives, they will prevail by default.

One reason football violence becomes possible is that the perpetrators think they do it on behalf of a much larger group, who do not take part, but give tacit agreement to the violence. The largest group, of course, disapprove entirely, but rarely do anything about it.

In 1996, there were fears of widespread violence at the Oxford v Swindon derby. This is a grim fixture, with an atmosphere that you might

have thought was left behind in the 1970s.

On this occasion, the local media made things worse by encouraging a slanging match over the relative merits of Oxford and Swindon. Regional TV gave representatives of local papers a minute each to bad-mouth the opposing town. It was a green light to the respective hooligans.

At the time I co-edited an Oxford fanzine. I was contacted by my Swindon counterparts, who shared these fears - and acted on them. They understood that the only people who can really influence football supporters are other supporters. The police are distrusted, the players' influence is limited and nobody listens to sanctimonious politicians. But sometimes fans listen to other fans.

Together, we embarked on press releases, media appearances and fanzine articles expressing opposition to the mutual contempt. This was

more than a moral lecture. We insisted that violence ruined the fixture. It made football frightening and unpleasant, it ruined our reputation in the public eye, and the real victims were supporters. As ordinary fans, we made opposition to violence a public issue.

In the event, there was practically no violence. I can't prove that our initiative was the reason: Oxford won 3-0, so perhaps our hooligans were sated, their demoralised. But I believe we had an effect.

Of course we did not convince violent individuals to become followers of Gandhi. But we may have influenced their periphery, their cheerleaders, by making them think, making them unsure whether it was right to fight for Oxford.

Supporters can combat violence where the police and courts cannot, with their own initiatives. This is the wedge with which we can split the violent from the would-be violent. There can be no going back, either to violence or to spikes and fences. Supporters can pre-empt both.

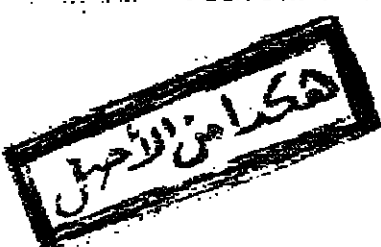
The alternatives are too awful to contemplate, and we stand to lose too much. Last month, a young man lost his life.

FAN'S EYE VIEW

NO 250 FIGHTING FOOTBALL HOOLOGANISM BY ED HORTON

...fears - and acted on them. They understood that the only people who can really influence football supporters are other supporters. The police are distrusted, the players' influence is limited and nobody listens to sanctimonious politicians. But sometimes fans listen to other fans.

Together, we embarked on press releases, media appearances and fanzine articles expressing opposition to the mutual contempt. This was



Bournemouth plan a Wembley celebration

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE attendances have been booming this season, fuelled particularly by gates at Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Nottingham Forest. However, the biggest crowd to watch two Nationwide teams in action so far this season will not be watching a First Division match.

A crowd up to 65,000 is expected to watch two Second Division teams when they meet tomorrow. Bournemouth and Grimsby Town face each other in the Auto Windscreens Shield final at Wembley.

Staging the final at Wembley has been the making of the competition. In the 1990s the final has attracted crowds of 45,000 (Colchester v Carlisle last year), 33,000 (Rotherham v Shrews-

bury in 1996), 76,000 (Birmingham v Carlisle in 1995), 48,000 (Swansea v Huddersfield in 1994), 35,000 (Port Vale v Stockport in 1993), 48,000 (Stoke v Stockport in 1992), 58,000 (Birmingham v Tranmere in 1991) and 48,000 (Tranmere v Bristol Rovers in 1990).

Tomorrow's match is a break for Grimsby in their fight to win promotion via the play-offs, while Bournemouth are in a secure position in mid-table.

Bournemouth's participation is a triumph for a club which was on the brink of closure last season. The fans rallied round to save them and up to 40,000 are expected to follow them to Wembley. While their average gate is less than 5,000, tomorrow's crowd shows the

strength of support for the club in the town.

The Bournemouth manager, Mel Machin, has one particularly tough decision to make. He must decide whether to recall his French centre-back, Franck Rolland, who scored the winning goal in the semi-final, or stick with Eddie Howe and Ian Cox. The winger Jason Brissett is competing with Mark Stein, on loan from Chelsea, for a place in attack alongside Steve Fletcher.

One former Grimsby player will be watching tomorrow's action with particular interest. The Everton winger John Ostrer has been involved in a Premiership relegation battle as his former colleagues have prepared for Wembley.

Ostrer said: "It is ironic. I've gone from being relegated into another relegation battle. And Grimsby are heading for Wembley. I suppose it's bad luck on my part. They're going for promotion and heading for Wembley and I am in a relegation battle. But I wouldn't change it."

Mark Pierson looks ahead to tomorrow's Auto Windscreens Shield final and the weekend Nationwide League programme

gone from being relegated into another relegation battle. And Grimsby are heading for Wembley. I suppose it's bad luck on my part. They're going for promotion and heading for Wembley and I am in a relegation battle. But I wouldn't change it."

"I wish them all the success in the world because they're

only a small club and they're up against the likes of Fulham who have got money to burn, whereas Grimsby have to do it the hard way."

Grimsby have had a reputation as giant-killers in previous competitions as West Ham, Leicester, Sheffield Wednesday and Everton will all testify. But Ostrer admits that the Auto Windscreens is the ideal vehicle for his former team-mates to display their talents.

Ostrer said: "They normally have a couple of upsets like West Ham, Leicester and Ever-

ton in the past. But they never seem to take it any further - a couple of upsets but that's it."

The Auto Windscreens gives the smaller clubs a chance of getting to Wembley because if there wasn't a competition like that you'd never see a Second or Third Division team at Wembley. Realistically the FA and Coca-Cola cups are out of reach and this gives those teams a chance of playing at Wembley which is a dream for any player."

Today's Nationwide League action sees battle resume for promotion from the First Division. Nottingham Forest will go to Stockport County knowing that victory will guarantee their return to the Premiership.

Forest have not won in any of their nine trips to Edgeley Park,

managing just three draws. They are set to name an unchanged side, with Andy Johnson expected to start ahead of Geoff Thomas in central midfield.

The Stockport manager, Gary Megson, is likely to keep faith with the side he heavily criticised after the Easter Monday defeat at Tranmere.

Second-placed Sunderland are likely to welcome back their central defender Jody Craddock at home to Crewe. He has been out for a month with a hamstring strain. The manager, Peter Reid, is expected to leave out Darren Holloway or Chris Makin. Alex Rae, unable to win back his place after suspension, is also pushing for a recall in midfield.

Charlton are the team in the

best form in the division. They entertain relegation-threatened Portsmouth. There is a doubt over midfielder Paul Mortimer (hamstring), but the central defender Richard Rufus is expected to be fit after a virus. The striker Mark Bright is looking for a return to the squad having recovered from a foot injury.

The Jamaican internationals Paul Hall and Fizzroy Simpson are both available for Portsmouth. They were due to miss the game due to international duty, but they will now link up with the Jamaican squad next week. Alan McLoughlin is battling to recover from a virus, while Mihalis Vlahos is expected to play despite still suffering the effects of an ankle injury.

FA Carling Premiership team news

Arsenal v Wimbledon
Bergkamp 20. Leading scorer: Last season: 0-1. Ewell 8.

Teenager Matthew Upson is likely to make his first Premiership start of the season as centre-back Martin Keown and Steve Bould are both suspended for today's match. Lee Dixon is back in the squad but is doubtful to start the game due to a continuing hamstring problem. Gilles Grimandi is also out, so Remy Garde could continue at full-back. Ian Wright is no nearer a come back, so Nicolas Anelka should continue up front alongside Dennis Bergkamp. The Gunners are looking for their seventh consecutive Premiership win. Wimbledon's new captain Robbie Earle is out of today's game, after being injured during the Don's 1-0 win at Southampton last Saturday. He was sent to hospital for x-rays, which revealed that he had suffered a broken toe which may well keep him out for the remainder of the season and also jeopardise his World Cup ambitions with Jamaica. Earle's absence is a setback for Wimbledon, who have come away from their last nine trips to Highbury undefeated. The Don's need a draw or victory to secure their Premiership place for another season.

Barnsley v Tottenham
Redfern 13. Leading scorer: Last season: No return. Givola 9.

Barnsley striker Ashley Ward is manager Danny Wilson's major doubt for today's relegation six-pointer at Oakwell. The Tykes have won nine of the 10 games in which Ward has scored, but he is struggling with a thigh strain sustained in Monday's 2-1 defeat at Newcastle. Fellow forward Jan-Aage Fjortoft is ready to play with bruised ribs after he collided with a post as he scored the equaliser at St James' Park. Alex Krizan (hamstring) and Peter Markstedt (neck) are out, while Darren Sheridan, Georgi Hristov, Jovo Bosancic and Chris Morgan are all suspended. Les Ferdinand is likely to win a place in the starting line-up for Tottenham after proving his fitness to coach Christian Gross. The England striker is likely to replace Chris Armstrong and partner Jürgen Klinsmann in attack. Darren Anderton will be on the bench again, even though Moussa Saib is ruled out, as Gross does not yet feel the England midfielder is fully match fit. Tottenham have won one of their last five Premiership matches. Defeat today would see them move into the relegation zone in place of their hosts.

Bolton v Leeds
Blake 12. Leading scorer: Last season: No return. Hasselbaink 19.

Colin Todd has selection problems today: nowhere more so than in defence, where long-term casualties Gerry Taggart, Mike Whitlow and Robbie Elliott could be joined by left-back Hansy Joloffree. He suffered a leg injury in the 4-0 defeat at Derby last Monday so Jimmy Phillips could be recalled, although central defender Mark Fish is fit after a suspected ankle problem. Scott Sellers (back) is missing, while striker Dean Holdsworth (hamstring) is out. Todd is hoping that on-loan Bob Taylor will be declared fit to partner Nathan Blake up front after treatment this week. Leeds will be without Portuguese midfielder Bruno Ribeiro for the rest of the season after he broke down in training on Thursday with a recurrence of his groin injury. Ribeiro, highly influential since last summer's move from Vitoria Setúbal, will undergo surgery next week. David Robertson is back in the squad for the first time since a cartilage operation two months ago, but is unlikely to take any part today. Centre-back Lucas Radebe is fit after being carried off - and sent off - with a thigh injury during last week's defeat at Everton.

C Palace v Derby
Dyer 8. Leading scorer: Last season: No return. Wanchop 16.

Crystal Palace midfielder Jamie Fullarton, who joined the club under the Bosman ruling following spells in Scotland and France, suffered a badly gashed leg during Palace's 2-1 defeat against Liverpool on Monday and he required several stitches. Fullarton is still hoping to make the Palace team ahead of his Scotland B call-up for next week. Full-back Jamie Smith, left out of Palace's side at Liverpool due to new player manager Attilio Lombardo's squad rotation system, is hoping to return to the starting line-up. Palace are still looking for their first Premiership home win of the season. Stefano Erario is out of Derby County squad for today's match at Selhurst Park. Erario, who came off with a groin injury in the 4-0 win against Bolton on Monday, has not recovered and will be out until May because of suspension. Derby's captain, Igor Stimac, returns from shoulder and back injuries and Lee Carsley has recovered from illness. Matt Poole and Dean Sturridge have a chest infection and heavy cold respectively. Jacob Laursen (knee) and Darryl Powell (ankle) are definitely out.

Everton v Leicester
Ferguson 10. Leading scorer: Last season: 1-1. Marshall 8.

Everton have Nicky Barry and teenager Danny Cadamarteri both serving one-match bans and unavailable today. Both Norwegian goalkeeper Thomas Myhre and England Youth defender Michael Ball have missed training this week with flu, but both should be fit to play. Dave Watson is still out with a knee problem. Everton's form has improved in recent weeks, and apart from losing 4-1 at home to Aston Villa three weeks ago, have won two and drawn two in their last five matches. They last lost at home to Leicester in 1985. Neil Lennon will lose his ever-present record for Leicester this season today because he is serving a one-match suspension. Garry Parker replaces the Northern Ireland international in midfield, while defender Steve Walsh comes in for Spencer Prior (knee). Ian Marshall could return to face his old club at the expense of Graham Fenton, while another ex-Goodison Park player, Tony Cottee, will be on the bench. Leicester manager Martin O'Neill believes that his side can still qualify for a UEFA Cup place. A win today appears to be the only result that would keep that aim viable.

...And statistics

How early baths are flooding the Premiership

Whether it is because players are becoming more indisposed, referees more card-happy or the rules more strict, one fact is clear: sendings-off in the Premiership are running at record levels this season.

Dismissals have been recorded at a rate of one in every six matches during the current campaign, which represents an increase of more than 100 per cent on last season. The highest proportion of dismissals in a season came two years ago, when 57 red cards were shown, compared with 56 so far this season.

The statistics dispel one or two myths about red cards. Most notably, the suggestion that "10 men can be more difficult to beat than 11" is shown to be far from true. Ten men have gone on to win games only five times this season - and on each occasion the winners were already leading when the red card was shown.

Fifteen other teams who had players dismissed held on for draws, while Sheffield Wednesday are the only team who saw their fortunes improve after having a player sent off. Andy Booth earned Wednesday a draw with a goal five minutes from time at Leicester after Dusan Stefanovic had been sent off in the first half.

One other popular myth disproved by the figures is that Wimbledon are a dirty team. Not only have Joe Kinnear's team had only one player dismissed this season (the one blemish was Ben Thatcher's second-minute dismissal at home to West Ham in December), but nobody has been sent off playing against them.

Only one Wimbledon match this season has therefore featured a red card - fewer than any other team. Bolton matches have seen 12 dismissals, while Manchester United are the only team not to have been shown a red card in Premiership action.

Premiership red cards

| Season | Red cards | Games | Red cards % |
|---------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| 1993-94 | 25 | 462 | 5.4 |
| 1994-95 | 27 | 462 | 5.8 |
| 1995-96 | 30 | 462 | 6.5 |
| 1996-97 | 57 | 380 | 15.0 |
| 1997-98 | 56 | 333 | 16.8 |

Ten-man winners this season

| Dismissals in brackets | Winning team | Score | Time |
|---|--------------|-------|---------|
| 30 Aug Chelsea 4 (Sinclair 80 mins) Southampton 2 | Chelsea | 4-2 | 90 mins |
| 28 Feb Leeds 0 Southampton 1 (Palmer 76 mins) | Southampton | 1-0 | 90 mins |
| 16-30 mins: 7 76-90 mins: 16 | | | |

When dismissals happen

| First half | Second half | Players on the home ground | Players away from home |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 16-30 mins: 7 31-45 mins: 3 | 46-60 mins: 7 61-75 mins: 12 | 14 | 38 |

Premiership red cards 1997-98

| Own players shown red card | Opponents shown red card |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Coventry 5 | 2 |
| Derby 5 | 2 |
| Blackburn 4 | 5 |
| Leeds 4 | 2 |
| Sheff Wed 4 | 2 |
| Sheff Wed 3 | 3 |
| Southampton 3 | 2 |
| Derby 2 | 5 |
| Leicester 2 | 3 |
| Blackburn 2 | 0 |
| C Palace 2 | 0 |
| Tottenham 1 | 2 |
| Wimbledon 1 | 0 |
| Man United 0 | 3 |

Who hands out the most red cards

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Graham Poll 8 | Uthair Pareira 4 |
| Gary Wither 7 | David Elzay 4 |
| Bolton Barber 5 | Paul Durkin 3 |
| Keith Burge 4 | Mike Riley 3 |



FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

| | P | Pts | GD | W | D | L | F | A | W | D | L | F | A | Remaining matches |
|----------------|----|-----|-----|----|---|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|---|
| 1 Arsenal | 34 | 67 | +28 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 36 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 26 | 17 | Today: Liverpool (H), 27 Apr: C Palace (A), 4 May: Leeds (H), 11 May: Sunderland (H) |
| 2 Liverpool | 33 | 58 | +20 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 33 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 23 | 16 | Today: Wimbledon (H), 25 Apr: Barnsley (A), 29 Apr: Derby (H), 2 May: Everton (H), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 18 May: A Villa (A) |
| 3 Chelsea | 33 | 54 | +25 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 30 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 33 | 26 | Tomorrow: Coventry (A), 25 Apr: Oxford (A), 2 May: West Ham (H), 6 May: Arsenal (H), 10 May: Derby (A) |
| 4 Tottenham | 33 | 54 | +13 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 27 | 17 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 23 | 20 | Tomorrow: Sheff Wed (H), 25 Apr: Liverpool (A), 29 Apr: Bolton (H), 2 May: Blackburn (H), 6 May: Newcastle (A), 10 May: Man United (A), 18 May: Wimbledon (H) |
| 5 Blackburn | 33 | 51 | +6 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 39 | 26 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 22 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Leicester (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 6 West Ham | 33 | 49 | +4 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 32 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 19 | 21 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Southampton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 7 Aston Villa | 34 | 48 | -1 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 24 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 18 | 22 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 8 Leicester | 33 | 45 | +6 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 20 | 15 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 22 | 21 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 9 Coventry | 33 | 45 | -10 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 22 | 16 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 22 | Tomorrow: Liverpool (H), 25 Apr: Leeds (A), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 10 Southampton | 34 | 44 | -4 | 10 | 1 | 6 | 27 | 19 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 17 | 29 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 11 Wimbledon | 33 | 43 | -3 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 16 | 19 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 15 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 12 Sheff Wed | 34 | 41 | -13 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 29 | 23 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 19 | 38 | Tomorrow: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 13 Derby | 33 | 39 | -3 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 19 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 20 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 14 Everton | 34 | 38 | -9 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 22 | 22 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 25 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 15 Bolton | 34 | 34 | -22 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 19 | 17 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 36 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 16 C Palace | 34 | 34 | -20 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 24 | 30 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 12 | 46 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |
| 17 Newcastle | 33 | 26 | -31 | 0 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 32 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 20 | 27 | Today: Bolton (H), 25 Apr: Bolton (H), 29 Apr: Arsenal (A), 2 May: Southampton (A), 6 May: Liverpool (A), 10 May: Sheff Wed (H) |



United form has Ferguson on the rails

Football

By Trevor Haylett

WE SHOULD presumably discount the theory that Alex Ferguson joined the horse-racing fraternity because having seen Arsenal creep up on the rails to threaten Manchester United's championship lead he wanted a pastime that was free of twists and turns and unexpected hurdles.

Similarly the view that he was persuaded into the "Sport of Kings" by the Manchester bookmaker who prematurely paid out on a United title success a month ago and was looking for a quick way to win back his money can be dismissed as mischievous speculation.

We should take Ferguson at his word when he says he has invested in prime horse flesh as a means of releasing some of the pressure that can become intolerable at this stage of the season. On Thursday he was a winner for the first time when his two-year-old Queensland Star finished ahead of the field in the 4.45 at Newmarket. But will the United manager come out on top in the race that really matters to him? The more you look at current form, and particularly the Easter outings, the more the Premiership appears destined for the Highbury stable.

Only a month ago United had a seemingly unassailable advantage yet such has been the ground made up by Arsenal's remorseless sprint in the final furlong that the two leaders

could be swapping places by teatime tonight. With only a single point separating them, the Gunners are at home to Wimbledon while Ferguson's team play host to Arsenal's FA Cup final opponents, Newcastle.

It is the London derby which holds most intrigue. Following their formidable display at Blackburn on Monday, Arsenal are now odds-on favourites to deny Old Trafford its fifth crown in six years though Wimbledon have been unbeaten at Highbury in their last nine visits and have the best defensive record away from home in the Premiership, with just 15 goals conceded in 15 games.

In 1989 Arsenal's first championship under George Graham looked to have been scuppered by Wimbledon's 2-2 draw away from home before an unbelievable sequence of events saw the Gunners awarded their prize after a heart-stopping climax at Anfield. Then, as now, their final fixtures included Wimbledon, Derby and Liverpool.

After Newcastle, United visit Selhurst Park to take on Crystal Palace (a fixture which has not stretched many away teams this season). They then host Leeds and finish in Yorkshire with a game at Barnsley.

The challenge Ferguson has set his side is to win all four. "Arsenal are in the driving seat at the moment and we are waiting for them to make a mistake," he said. "That is all we can do."

"The most important thing is for us to win our games although it's always very difficult

at this stage of the season because teams are fighting hard for various reasons."

Arsenal have both Steve Bould and Martin Keown suspended and Gilles Grimandi, a natural defensive replacement, is injured. Arsène Wenger may decide to switch Emmanuel Petit to the back line with Stephen Hughes coming into midfield or he could start with Matthew Upson - 19 today - alongside Tony Adams.

The Highbury manager said: "Against Blackburn we played a passing game and against Wimbledon we must fight physically and cope with long balls. That is why the championship is so difficult as the games are so different. We must forget about Blackburn and focus just on Wimbledon."

"We were on a high at Blackburn which was one of the moments when we reached what we want to do but my job is to convince everyone we must battle very hard tomorrow and if we are not mentally prepared we will be disappointed. We have the title in our hands but we are not over confident."

Beneath the top two, the battle for the UEFA Cup places was given a shot in the arm by Chelsea's remarkable victory over Vicenza on Thursday that means they will be contesting the Cup-Winners' Cup final. Should they beat Stuttgart in Stockholm on 13 May, the Stamford Bridge club will re-enter the same competition next season releasing the UEFA Cup place that was theirs after winning the Coca-Cola Cup.

It means that seventh place could be a European berth for next season and add spice to this afternoon's clash at Upton Park between West Ham in eighth and Blackburn, who are two places and two points better off.

John Hartson will be anxious to sign off for the Hammers in the fashion he began the season - with goals and more goals - rather than the way he has ended it, on a flurry of cards, red and yellow, that means he will miss the last four games through suspension.

Blackburn could welcome back their second choice goalkeeper John Filan, who broke an arm in August.

World Cup ticket numbers

WORLD CUP organisers yesterday announced the telephone numbers for supporters wishing to buy the final 10,000 tickets for this summer's tournament.

In response to criticisms that not enough tickets had been made available to ordinary fans overseas, the organising committee announced last week that it would make extra tickets available by phone from next Tuesday.

The telephone numbers to call are (00-33-1-49-87-53-54 (calls from Europe); (08-03-00-19-98 (calls from within

France); and 01-49-87-53-54 (calls from the French colonies). Lines will be open from 07.00 BST until 19.00 on weekdays and from 08.00 BST until 19.00 on Saturday 2 May.

There are tickets available for all first and second round matches, except the opening game between Brazil and Scotland on 10 June. Tickets will be available on a first-come first-served basis and can be paid for by credit card.

Each buyer will be allowed to purchase up to four tickets per game, with an overall limit of 16 tickets per person.



Michael Atherton prepares for action on Hove's rain-soaked pitch yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Atherton and Lara both draw blanks

Cricket

By Derrick Whyte

THE CARIBBEAN was not Brian Lara and Michael Atherton, opposing captains in the winter Test series between the West Indies and England, resigned to action yesterday as the Leicestershire Assured County Championship season started after a week of overcast skies, torrential rain and sodden pitches.

If the two men had looked forward to the occasion with less than overwhelming enthusiasm, their mood could hardly have been improved after their cameo appearances. Both men were dismissed without scoring.

Atherton, playing for Lancashire against Sussex at Hove on a day ruined by rain, fell leg before to Jason Lewry. Lara, meanwhile, lasted only eight balls at Edgbaston for Warwickshire at home to Durham - the county he hit for a world record 501 not out on the same ground in 1994 - before he was caught by Martin Spight off the bowling of John Wood.

Lara found himself upstaged by his colleague, Neil Smith, who struck the opening championship century of the campaign. Smith, who reached his century in 137 minutes off only 11 balls, raised Warwickshire's hopes of a sizeable first-innings total after they had been 24 for 3 following the departures of Lara, Dominic Odet and Nick Knight.

David Byas also scored a first-day century as Yorkshire built a good total against Somerset at Headingley. Yorkshire recovered well after a shaky start caused by Anthony McGrath's dismissal for a duck with only one run on the board.

While Atherton failed, his vice-captain in the Caribbean, Nasser Hussain, made 68 as Essex built a useful total against Worcestershire at New Road.

After a rainy week there was a surprisingly large amount of cricket played yesterday, with Canterbury and the Oval the only grounds suffering washouts.

More cricket, page 19

ELEVEN PAGES OF SPORT BEGIN ON PAGE 14

James and Evans hold off first salvo

By Derek Hodgson at Bristol

Gloucestershire v Glamorgan

GLAMORGAN, the Britanic Assurance champions, had to wait until 2pm to start the defence of their title, then lost the toss and had to bat on a surface of unknown properties. The cloud had lifted but the wind stayed fierce and cold all day and Courtney Walsh, fresh from a Trinidad heatwave was said, by a local, to have been "limbering up in a duvet".

Gloucestershire did at least have their overseas professional present; Glamorgan are still awaiting Waqar's arrival. Yet it was no day for either of these great fast bowlers, rather one for those traditional English skills of seam and swing.

It happened that the first pitch from the groundsmen, David Bridle, was both reasonably firm and fair. Mike Smith needs South-western zephyrs for his swing, not a sleet-threatening blow, while Walsh, with the wind was mostly careful to fire in no more than one ball an over, minimising the risk of stretch and strain in this climate.

Accordingly Steve James, with deft turns to leg, and Alun Evans, hitting straighter, managed an assured opening stand of 64 in 27 overs, seeing off the opening assault and coping with the second string of Jon Lewis and Mark Alleyne. Both survived leg-before appeals, albeit from the field and from the ring, and Alleyne might have been beginning to wish he had opted to bat when he switched

to bowl around the wicket to Evans.

The young batsman tried a flick to leg to a ball slanting across him, and it flew high off the blade to second slip. The next ball, the first of the next over, was quick enough to surprise James, who was caught behind the wicket. Most of the several hundred brave souls watching suddenly found unexpected warmth.

Walsh, who was looking suffer by the minute, returned for his second spell and had his first delivery cut to the boundary by an exceedingly confident looking Matthew Maynard. The champions were just beginning to pick up momentum again when, with the last ball before tea, Walsh totally confounded their captain with a change of pace.

David Graveney, the chairman of selectors, attended with an obvious interest in Glamorgan (But just who was he looking at? Maynard? James?). He is also a believer in Smith's talents at Test level and Alleyne, as has been said before, is an all-rounder of misleading capacity. He does have all the credentials required of a one-day player and the World Cup is looming up.

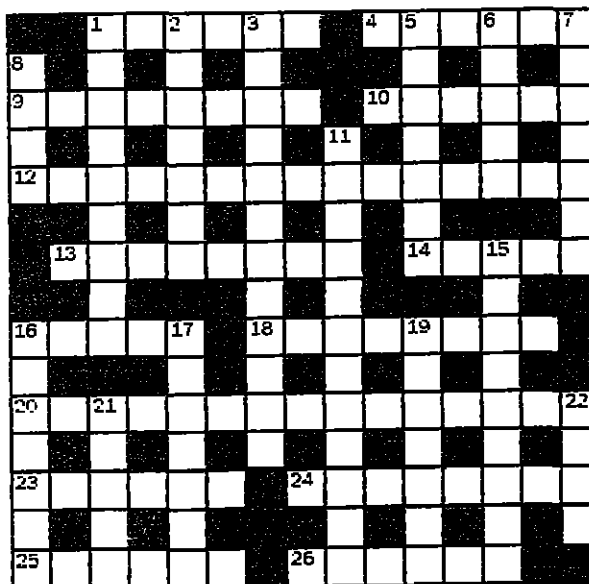
It was Alleyne, bowling with constant changes of pace, who trapped Tony Cottrey after tea. By that stage, Walsh was down to using only half a run but he was still managing to pitch deliveries short enough for Adrian Dale to win byes from a ball that flew off his chest.

This was a day of Cool Britannic and Hardy Assurance.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

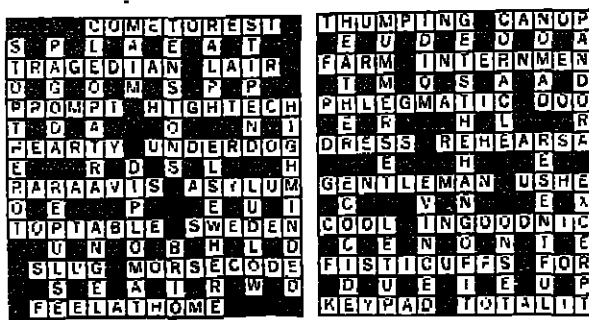
No. 3588, Saturday 18 April

By Mass



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



ACROSS

- 1 Birds loudly migrating, but not far (6)
- 4 Sound from bee trapped in flat (6)
- 9 Animal, creature giving East European a turn (8)
- 10 Slate, to a degree, provides top cover (6)
- 12 A situation leading to one's dismissal? (3,6,6)
- 13 Man is frustrated in dull post (8)
- 14 Network introducing Ibson's last work (5)
- 16 Pours for eleveners, as they say? (5)
- 18 Home fruit reinforced with a French glut (8)
- 20 Score during play (10,5)
- 23 I grew a tangled creeper (6)
- 25 Spirit with fish, then bit of fruit (8)
- 26 Tie sporting black crest (6)

DOWN

- 1 An egret, it could be, in pool (9)
- 2 Girl with county slant, vocally (7)
- 3 Polo activities? (12)
- 5 Drink group's splitting (7)
- 6 Clean with vacuum (5)
- 7 Measure appeared as decreed (7)
- 8 Designate State line (4)
- 11 To whom the inner man's of special interest (12)
- 15 Leaving nothing in gallery, boxing collection up (9)
- 16 After time fixes brackets (7)
- 17 Seconds ticking over, slipping away (7)
- 19 Deceived defence is broken, split by cunning mime? (7)
- 21 Vehicle to run goods (5)
- 22 Modest about piano transcript (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive complimentary copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, Authors and Writers' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: J Edwards, Christchurch; D Scotchbrook, Herne Bay; P&K Burns, Ufford; V Johns, Braunton; C Moore, London E14.





YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 18 April 1998

How to finger card fraudsters

With fraud-costing credit card issuers £96m a year, firms are looking at hi-tech alternatives to signatures.
Paul Stade reports

Imagine trying to pay for your purchase with a credit card. You proffer the card at the till. Staff behind the counter swipe it through a machine and then ask to carry out a fingerprint check on you. Or demand that you look into another machine for your iris to be "read".

Sounds like Big Brother gone mad? The two examples above are the latest techniques being tested as part of the long-running battle to combat plastic card fraud, which cost card companies £96m in 1996. Retailers still rely mostly on a basic signature to establish that card users are who they say they are. But all the while, they are devising more sophisticated systems to combat fraudsters.

Fingerprinting of credit and debit cardholders has even been given a seal of approval by the authors of a new Home Office report, issued last month.

Michael Levi, professor of criminology at Cardiff University and one of the authors of the report, suggests all cards should carry the owner's fingerprints, which can then be checked against records held at the till.

This, he argues, would not only guard against fraud, but would help the police. "Fingerprinting and voice-prints are less useful for search and arrest, since they are not included in police records," he points out.

There is no technical problem in encoding fingerprints on a microchip attached to the card. There are 110,000 chip cards already being tested in Northampton and Dunfermline. The chips do the same job as the magnetic strip which cards already carry, but can hold a lot more information.

Collecting customers' fingerprints to check the cards

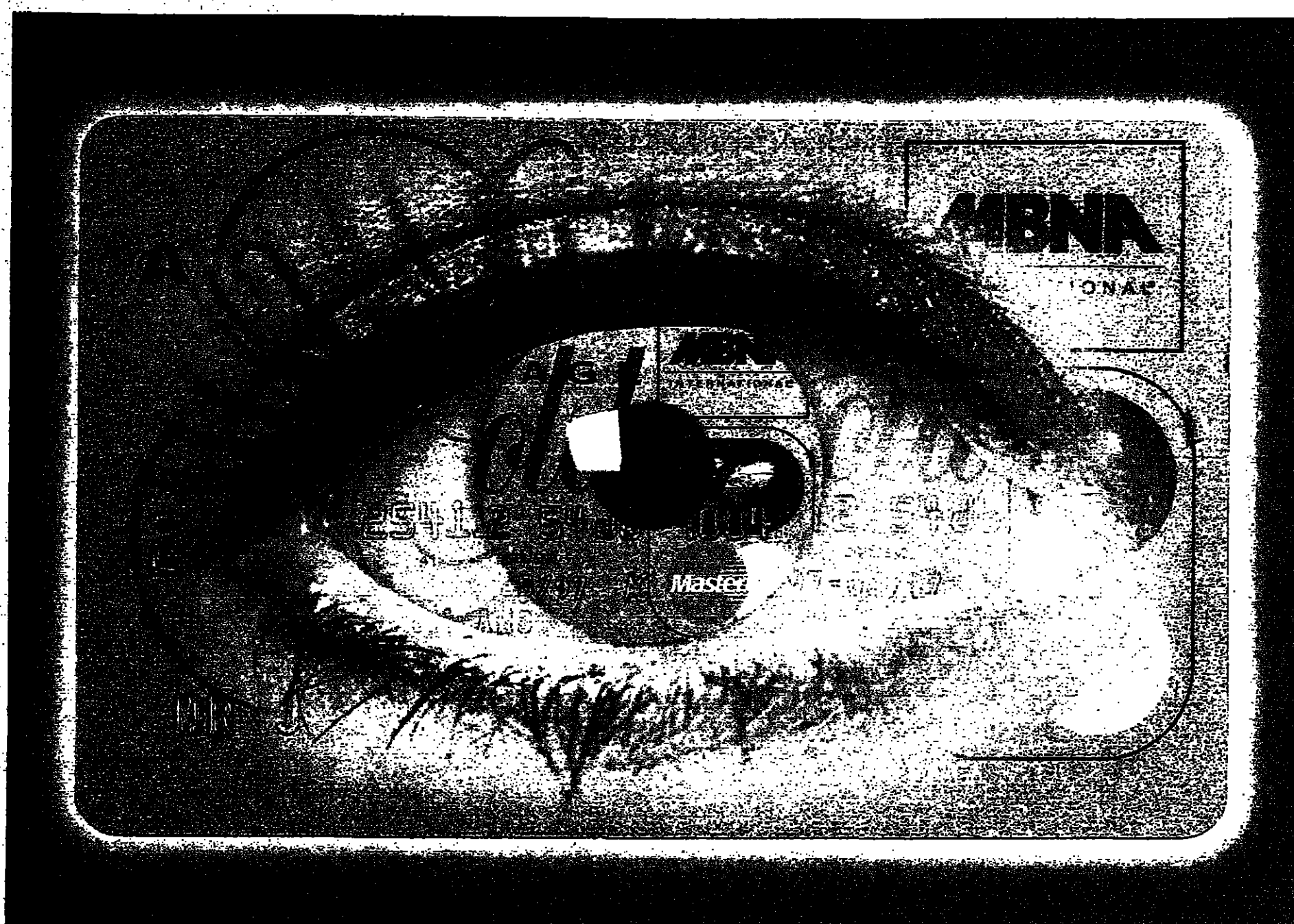


Illustration: Jonathan Anstee

against - with all the civil liberty issues that implies - may prove more of a challenge.

Steve Collins, director of emerging markets at Barclays, says: "Fingerprinting is one of the options we are considering. What we have at the moment is an authentication mechanism in the chip to prove the authenticity of the card. The next thing to worry about is whether the person presenting the card is the

genuine owner," Richard Tyson-Davies of the Association of Payment Clearing Systems calls the chip cards an investment in the future, and says fingerprints may be included one day. "We have the capacity there if it's needed," he says. His guess is that the first nationwide chip cards will be issued later this year.

Card issuers must walk a tightrope between security and usability. There is little point in

making a fraud-proof card if that leads to the real owner often being rejected when he tries to use it. Experiments with iris-scans at cash machines have so far failed to crack this problem.

Erica Harper of Royal Bank of Scotland says: "With the iris ones, until very recently, the rejection rate for legitimate cardholders was too high. Everyone gets annoyed if their card is used fraudulently, but even

more annoyed if they're wrongly rejected."

We are all endlessly perverse in our attitudes towards checks like these. Mr Collins says: "The research that's been done on fingerprints indicates that, if you don't get the occasional rejection, people don't think it's doing anything." The latest generation of eye-scanning technology will soon be tested in Swindon, where Nationwide

plans to add a scanning camera to its head office cash machine. The society hopes to persuade some 1,000 customers to volunteer for the trial. Nationwide's Mark Hamilton says: "We'll scan their iris and put it into a database. Once you're on the database, instead of keying in your PIN number, you can have your iris recognised."

This technology too has its limits. Anyone over six foot six

will be out of the Nationwide camera's range, and people with thick glasses may find the machine cannot recognise them.

It may be that the humble signature is not such a bad method after all. Royal Bank of Scotland claims to have prevented fraudulent transactions worth over £1.5m in the past five years simply by adding the customer's signature to the card before it is posted out.

INDEX

Pension plea

Pension funds this week called for an overhaul of the tax system affecting them, claiming simpler rules on how much may be invested would save between £1bn and £2bn. This money could then be used to boost retirement incomes, said the National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF). The NAPF wants to see existing limits scrapped on the maximum 15 per cent of salary that can be paid into a pension fund. It also wants the upper earnings cap of £87,600 to be abolished. It claims its proposals would be tax-neutral, because pensions could still be taxed when they are paid as income.

Property rise

House prices rose by 0.6 per cent in March, compared with no change the previous month. The rise brings to 5 per cent the annual rate of house price inflation, according to Halifax. The figures masked disparities among regions: prices in the past year rose by 12.4 per cent in London and the South-east, but fell by up to 1 per cent in Yorkshire, Humberside and Scotland.

Gone for a song

Once upon a time you were probably too stoned out of your head to notice it. Meanwhile, canny collectors who took home psychedelic posters from 1960s gigs may be sitting on a mint. John Windsor tells all. **Page 3**

Offshore assets

Working abroad for a few years can be one of the most exciting periods in anyone's life. It also helps if someone is there to help with all the relocation work, as Robert Liebman explains. **Page 9**

Fingerprinting on cards looks sure to prove a valuable new source of gory tales for the saloon bar raconteur. Already we have the urban myth of a tourist visiting Latin America who is mugged and awakes in an alley to find one of his kidneys has been removed. It is a short step from there to tales of cardholders being robbed, not only of their cards

THUMBS UP FOR VERIFICATION TALES?

but also of the body parts needed to use them. One of the bank professionals I spoke to in preparing this piece told me such a story in all seriousness. She had heard that, in South Africa, collecting your unemployment benefit depends on identifying yourself with a

thumb print. Fraudsters, she said, had found a way round this. "They were cutting off people's thumbs," she whispered.

This seemed unlikely, if only because officials are likely to notice if you produce a bloody thumb to stamp the relevant documentation. South

Africa House confirms that the country's benefit system does not use fingerprints, so what we have here is a genuine urban myth.

Of course, simply because a story is untrue does not mean it will not be told. How long before people here are telling one another about a friend of a friend who had his ATM card stolen - "and they cut out his eyes".

Breaking the chains around housebuyers

Speed up property sales and, some believe, you throttle gazumping, the nasty practice whereby buyers are elbowed aside by other buyers bearing more furore. The Law Society has introduced a series of tentative anti-gazumping proposals for consideration by the Government Homebuying Review Group. The proposals comprise flexible financing, a stockholding company and a vendor-prepared house MOT. Flexible financing enables sellers to finance a new property without first selling their current premises. Stockholding companies would help prevent a chain breaking by temporarily buying properties. The pack includes a draft contract, search and a log-book of repairs and basic house information to be passed on by the vendor to the prospective buyer.

The proposals aim "to make every conveyancing transaction independent of all others". In the Law Society's example, the sellers, with a £40,000 mortgage, are buying an £80,000 house. They want to buy a property for £110,000 and assume a £70,000 mortgage. The total - temporary - mortgage required is £110,000.

Because the borrower only needs the extra amount until the old property is sold, the extra costs of this approach would not be too high, the Law Society argues. The cost of temporarily having two debts would be spread over the term of the new mortgage. "A capitalised sum would not significantly increase the cost of the £70,000 mortgage, and a mortgage on a repayment basis need not

A set of proposals to speed up housebuying is being proposed by the Law Society, writes Robert Liebman

increase the annual cost at all. The repayment period could be extended." The Law Society wants the Government to offer tax incentives to the stockholding companies buying the surplus properties. But it claims this would be self-financing because, in return, there would be an increase in property transactions, leading to more stamp duty being paid.

Kenneth Byass, chairman of the Law Society's property and commercial services committee, says: "Although further work is needed to free the residential property market from chains, initial Law Society analysis has clearly shown it could be achieved."

Mr Hollis is far from convinced that, by availing themselves of the stockholding company, individual links in the chain can independently speed things up. He says: "It would work if everyone accepted the brokerage process because, in effect, it's analogous to buying a used motor car. You still have

the problem of people whose home you want to buy needing to move out, which means you have to bridge and encourage them to go. It is a case of everyone doing it. It won't be successful if only one or two in the chain do it."

North London estate agent Joanna Haydon-Knowell welcomes "anything that speeds up the process", but warns these proposals contain many niggly bits. "Stockholding organisations could easily mean that some vendors will not get the best prices," she says. "If these companies sell on the properties using only tied agents, sellers may lose out."

Ms Haydon-Knowell observes that even a modest additional cost can have a big impact: "Most sellers are trading up, paying more than they are selling for. A differential of a few thousand pounds could make the difference in terms of what they really want to buy, or their budget for decorating and repairs."

She notes that "from going on to the market to completion, most sales take more than three months" - the period of time for which searches are legally valid. In any event, "most purchasers will be wary of a survey done by the vendor". She also foresees scepticism from the banks and building societies.

Solicitors also have doubts. Bob Hall, of Baker & McKenzie, believes that "the flexible finance idea is too timid,

and the vendor information pack does not go far enough". The Law Society's example works "only because the prices mentioned are feasible. You have a more difficult problem if, let us say, a purchaser already has a high mortgage on an existing property. The problem is the cost of finding the solution, and I don't think tinkering with flexible finance or stockholding is actually going to solve it."

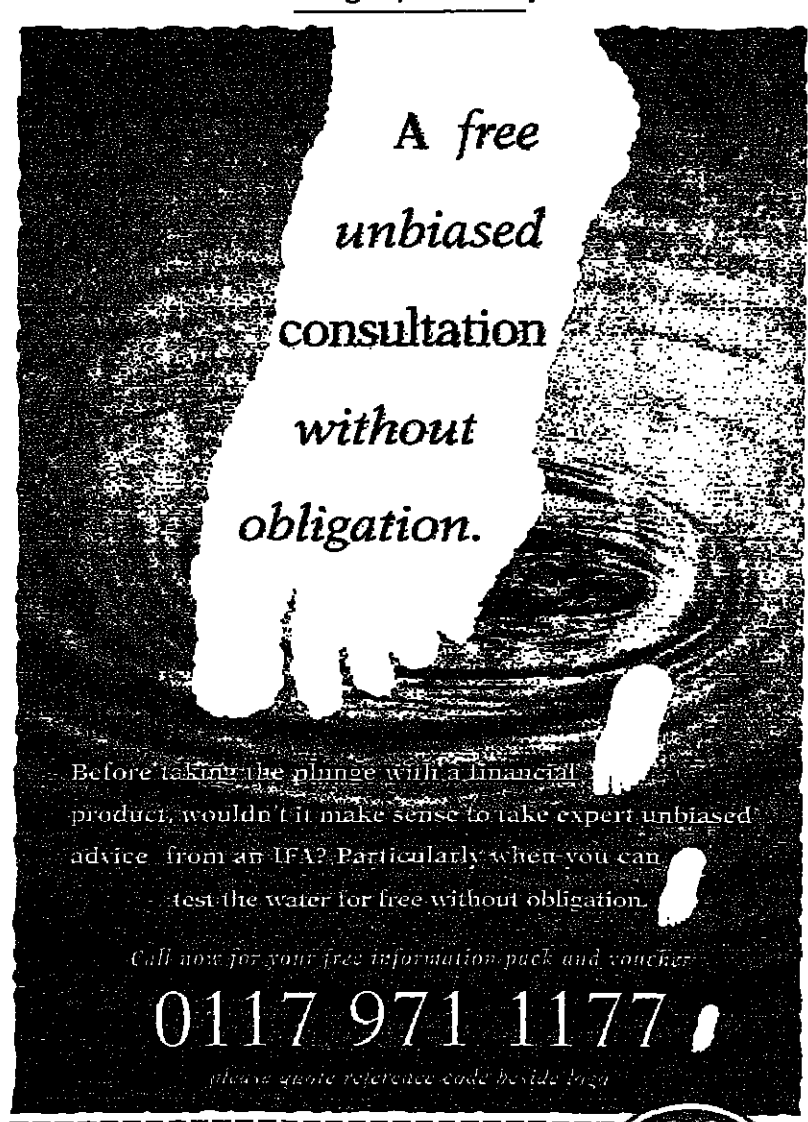
Mr Hall wonders that the Law Society didn't emphasise lock-out agreements, where a deal to buy a home means the vendor removes it from the market, and he thinks that "the state could even require vendors, if they breach the agreement, to pay the purchaser's aborted costs".

He adds: "There must be a sufficient number of purchasers to enable insurance companies to offer policies so that, for a premium, if a purchaser can't find a buyer within a certain time period, the insurer will pay a monthly sum in respect of additional mortgage costs."

As for unrealistic buyers wanting properties they clearly cannot afford, Mr Hall adds: "I don't think we should get into state-backed arrangements which somehow take the risk out of purchasing property. It is not the state's role to remove commercial pressure and the realities of buying a property." Mr Hollis concedes that the proposals "could speed up the process but only if people were prepared to pay for the privilege. These sums would be hard to come by, and I can't see people willingly spending it".

Thought for the day

A free unbiased consultation without obligation.



Before taking the plunge with a financial product, wouldn't it make sense to take expert unbiased advice from an IFA? Particularly when you can test the water for free without obligation.

Call now for your free information pack and voucher

0117 971 1177

please quote reference code 1024 1024

Please send me my information pack, the names of three local IFAs and a voucher for a free consultation without obligation. I understand that no-one will call me as a result of filling in this coupon. The address is IFAP Limited, 17-19 Emory Road, Brighthelm, Bristol BS4 5PT.

Name _____ Address _____ Postcode _____

You'd be better off with an IFA

THIS ADVERTISEMENT APPEARS ON BEHALF OF BRITAIN'S INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVISERS AND HAS BEEN APPROVED BY A PERSON REGULATED BY THE FCA

LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY



BREWING FOREVER



Buying a house could not be easier

NIC CICUTTI

I sold a home once, to a couple of first-time buyers while I was living in rented accommodation. So the effect of the dreaded "chain", where one's transaction is dependent on the fortunes of myriad other buyers and vendors, was not too great on me.

But others tell me that the psychological effect of a chain breaking down is not to be downplayed. So I'm generally in favour of anything which cuts extra trauma for homebuyers.

Yet somehow, I get the feeling this week's Law Society proposal on how to avoid such traumas (detailed on our front page), is not the answer to the problem. Probably, Law Society chiefs must have felt that unless they could come up with something clever on this subject, the credibility of lawyers as probably the biggest earners in the entire househunting process would be shot to pieces.

In fact, their proposals feel more like the product of one of those late-night, alcohol-fuelled attempts to solve the world's ills. Usually, as now, the cold light of day reveals these big ideas for what they really are.

The problem, as the experts in our own piece explain, is that one of the suggestions the Law Society believes is the best way forward - stockholding companies that buy up your home if private buyers drop out or don't even materialise - depends on everyone in the chain adopting the same method.

It means sellers probably having to accept a significantly lower price for their properties, in order to fund the administration costs (and

the profits) of these firms. I'm not convinced many buyers would accept this option, particularly at a time of fast-rising house price inflation. Under such conditions, gazumping rules and chains break. Meanwhile, in times of financial crises, lenders will not be too keen on offering mortgages to cover both the cost of the new home and the existing loan on the old one until it is sold.

It is unlikely that the Government would want to give stockholding companies the tax breaks urged by the Law Society. All in all, this is a mishmash of ideas which, even if enacted, will only have a limited effect on transaction times and costs.

So what is the alternative? To be honest, I don't think there is much of a solution. The reality is that even lock-out agreements, whereby houses are taken off the market once an offer is accepted, or forcing buyers (and sellers) to pay for aborted purchase costs, would not be that effective. In this last instance, it is likely people would become far more litigious, claiming all sorts of excuses prevented a transaction from being completed. Ultimately, the reality for anyone wishing to enter the home ownership stakes is that there is pain alongside the ecstasy involved. Half-baked solutions do little to prevent that.

And finally, congratulations to Edmund Tubb, one of our contributors, who won the British Insurance & Investment Brokers' Association award for Journalist of the Year. He also took first prize in the consumer broadsheet category for a story which appeared in this paper last year. The best writers really do appear in this section.

MONEY MAKEOVER

Disability needn't handicap your retirement

Name: Stephen Brazier
Age: 51

Occupation: Local government officer
The problem: Stephen is about to take early retirement after having recently been registered as blind. His concerns are to maximise his family's income in retirement, both by using his existing investments and a lump sum he will receive on leaving work.

The advice: By making full use of various state benefits, investing some of his retirement money in a range of relatively safe corporate-bond personal equity plans (PEPs) this year, individual Savings Accounts next year, plus "distribution bonds", Stephen should be able to improve his family finances.

Stephen Brazier says that he is a natural planner. He has been planning his retirement for some years, during which time the primary objective has been to save aggressively. With a joint annual income of £50,000-plus, no mortgage and relatively low overheads, Stephen and his wife Carol have sailed away enough to enable them both to feel financially secure.

This is important for Stephen, who has recently been registered as blind and, as a result, is about to take ill-health retirement. Carol, who also works in local government, is not planning to give up work for the time being.

Stephen expects an annual pension of around £17,000, considerably less than his current £40,000 salary, but is confident the family can manage. Any entitlement to state benefits would put them in the "comfort zone", he feels. The adviser: Graham Bates is chairman at Bates & Partners, a leading independent financial advice firm with branches nationwide (0113 295 5955). The advice: Stephen should apply for the disability living allowance, which is available in two parts. A care allowance pays a weekly amount based on three different bands - £13.16, £35.85 and £51.30 - and a mobility allowance, which

pays a weekly sum of either £13.60 or £35.85. These benefits are paid free of tax up to a maximum age of 65.

Although the disability living allowance is not means tested, any amount for which Stephen is eligible has to be determined by a benefits officer and is based on an assessment of the level of care required.

In addition, Stephen could apply for incapacity benefit, available up to the age of 65. Again, incapacity benefit is not means tested, although payments are taxable at your highest rate. National Insurance contributions are credited for you up to the age of 65 and this was one of Stephen's concerns, to ensure his eligibility for a full state pension. During the first 28 weeks of a claim, incapacity benefit is £48.80 a week. In weeks 29 to 52, it increases to £57.70 and after 12 months, to £64.70. As Stephen has a dependent daughter, he may also be able to claim a small additional amount in respect of her.

Next, we should look at his and Carol's existing investments. They each have "roll-over" Tassas, with £18,000 jointly invested in Birmingham Midshires. This means the Braziers can also expect to receive a windfall bonus in due course as Midshires is taken over, possibly by Halifax. Other deposit-based investments include £14,000 in total in Carol's name with Nationwide (postal account) and Woolwich. Perhaps part of this cash could be invested elsewhere.

PEPs have featured strongly in Stephen and Carol's financial planning. In all, they have five different PEPs, with a total initial investment of some £27,000. The first PEP was in a Save & Prosper managed fund, which Stephen doesn't feel has performed well. Gartmore Select Opportunities, a European unit trust, has achieved top quartile performance over one, three and five years. It is an excellent holding for long-term capital growth.

Another of Stephen's European fund selections, Morgan Grenfell



Stephen and Carol Brazier could be in for a windfall Page One

European Growth, has not performed well recently. With little sign of real improvement, consideration needs to be given to switching this to an alternative PEP. Transfers can be carried out without affecting normal annual PEP allowances. For the last tax year they opted for investment trust PEPs and Stephen invested £6,000 in the Henderson Witan: a huge international trust

with a solid record. Carol plumped for the Fleming Smaller Companies Trust, for which the timing looks to be reasonably good. These should both be retained with the aim of achieving long-term capital appreciation.

Stephen is expecting a capital sum of around £50,000 on retirement. Of this, £12,000 is to be used to maximise this final year's PEP allowances.

Stephen has voiced concern about becoming too heavily exposed to equities. One option would be to invest in corporate-bond PEPs, which tend to be less volatile.

Stephen would also like to set aside £14,000 in the new-style Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) for himself and Carol when this new savings vehicle is launched in April 1999. Up to £7,000 can be invested in the first year of each ISA, following which the limit reduces to £5,000. However, it would be imprudent to make specific recommendations so far in advance.

Although Stephen is concerned about short-term price movements as the market continues to reach new record highs, it is important that he does not forget the main objective of share-based investment, which is to achieve long-term capital growth.

To help lower the overall risk of the Braziers' investment portfolio, they should consider a "distribution fund" where, typically, the manager will invest in a combination of blue chip equities and fixed-interest securities. A with-profits bond would also provide a good anchor to the portfolio.

Stephen and Carol benefited in 1997 from free shares in Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich. They should hold on to these while the banking sector continues to drive the stock market's rise.

A further consideration is the education of Stephen's daughter from his first marriage, which will cost around £12,000 over the next four years. This capital must be accessible, safe and not subject to day-to-day volatility. Safe and exciting is hard to achieve but premium bonds might be worth considering. Winnings are tax free and the capital is available within seven days. Who knows, they might just hit the jackpot.

Finally, Stephen has had a bit of a gamble of his own - investing £1,000 in five Japanese guitars. Hardly a standard investment but Stephen confesses that playing his guitar is a touch more interesting than playing the market.

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT/MIDLAND BANK CAPITAL PROTECTED PEP

The Product: Midland Bank Capital Protected PEP

The Deal: Savers worried about the potential risks of stock market investment are being wooed by Midland, which initially offered a choice of two PEPs.

The UK Option closed this week. The International Option,

which is open until 30 April, links returns to the performance of markets in the UK, Europe, Japan and the US.

The exposure is 25 per cent to the UK stock market, plus the same for the S&P 500 in the US and the Japan Nikkei 225. The last 25 per cent is spread between France, Switzerland,

Germany and Holland in roughly equal measures.

After five and a half years, investors receive the full growth of the indices or their money back if they fall. The guarantees are by means of futures and options deals. The opening and closing values of the indices will be averaged, using daily averages

over the first and last six months of the investment period. The PEP qualifies for general and single company purposes, allowing up to £9,000 to be invested, with a minimum set by Midland of £3,000. Plus Points: If you believe world markets are likely to be volatile in the next few years,

guaranteed funds can seem a sensible option.

The averaging of index values is a further "steady Eddie": the potential for dramatic returns is lost, in return for less downside if markets go silly in the first and last six months. Drawbacks and Risks: Using options means the dividend

yield from shares, worth about 1-3 per cent annually, is not added to the final value of the fund. It is impossible to choose when to cash in, such as after a good bull run, or wait to ride out a bear market. Moreover, do you really want to acquire Japanese exposure right now? Marks out of Five: Two

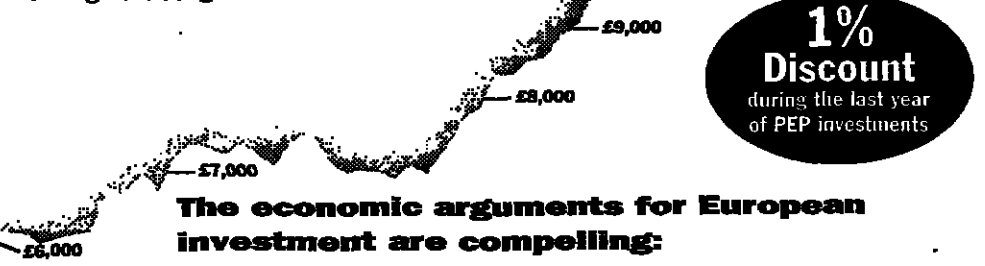
Singer & Friedlander

TAX FREE
PEP BENEFITS
PROTECTED
BY THE BUDGET

Continental PEP

20.2%
p.a.

*£6,000 PEP'ed into the Singer & Friedlander Continental Trust on 31/3/93 would have risen to £15,034 by 31/3/98 - an average annual growth of 20.2%.



The economic arguments for European investment are compelling:

- Continental economic growth rates are recovering strongly.
- Increased efficiency and privatisations have created major opportunities for shareholders.
- Investors will gain should Sterling fall from its current level.
- We believe EMU will create exciting opportunities for European investment.

The Budget announcement makes PEP investment even more attractive. Contact us today for a PEP application and for our free report: "The Case for European Investment in 1998"

Freecall 0800 068 55 44

To: Singer & Friedlander Portfolio Management Ltd., FREEPOST LON 2280, London EC2B 2AA.
Pec: 0171 857 8780. Email: information@singers.co.uk. Please send me full details of your Continental Trust PEP. I am also interested in consolidating my PEP investments under one manager (please tick) ☐

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms: _____ Initials: _____
Surname: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____ IND 18/4

Singer & Friedlander



*All performance source: Micropal, offer to bid, gross income reinvested. The value of units and the income from them may fall as well as rise and you may not get back the amount you invest. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of PEP tax reliefs will depend on your individual circumstances. Changes in exchange rates may affect the value of units. Telephone calls may be recorded, issued by Singer & Friedlander Portfolio Management Ltd., 21 New Street, London EC2M 4HR. Regulated by IMRO.

If you do not wish to receive information about other Singer & Friedlander products, please tick ☐

The Corporate Bond PEP

The low cost
high income PEP

INVEST
NOW
to make the most
of your final year's
PEP allowance

Legal & General have led the way in providing low cost, high performance PEPs to our customers.

Over the years, our determination to provide outstanding value for money has meant that today Legal & General Investment Management has in excess of £60 billion under management.

A glance at the table shows that we deliver unbeatable value, providing the lowest cost diversified Corporate Bond PEP on the market with annual management charges of only 0.5%, with no initial charges on lump sum investments or withdrawal fees.

So, for a regular, tax-free income on your savings find out more about Britain's best value Income PEP today.

Just complete and return the coupon.

Legal & General Corporate Bond PEP 0.5% 6.8%

NO initial charges
NO withdrawal fee
0.5% annual management charge

Visit our web site at www.LandG.com

Find out more now -
phone free

0500 1166 22

Sam to 8pm weekdays.
9am to 5pm weekends.

Please quote ref: CTD17

YES I would like more information about the Legal & General Corporate Bond PEP. For me to receive this information, please tick here ☐. If you already have any PEP investments, please tick here ☐. We may telephone you to make sure information requested has arrived safely. Now and then, we may tell you about other products or services offered by the Legal & General Group of companies that we believe may be of interest to you. If you would prefer not to receive this carefully selected information, please tick here ☐

Surname (Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms) _____ Forename(s) _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Date of birth _____
Tel. No. Home _____
Tel. No. Work _____

Legal & General

هكذا من الأصل

Rock art on a roll

New Wave rock concert posters from San Francisco – the latest rock-art investment collectable – are about to surge in price. The punky music may not be new. But the art is. Psychedelia has been superseded by trash new graphics that are a distinctive blend of comic-book cartoon, Hollywood film poster and in-ner-face punk.

Posters by the rising New Wave star Alan Forbes, 29, retailed for \$20 six months ago. Now, fresh off the silk-screen presses in the basement of ArtRock, the world's biggest distributor of rock'n'roll art, on the seedy side of San Francisco, the price is \$200. Forbes hand-letters and prints the posters in limited editions of 250 or so, applying up to 11 different-coloured layers of ink. Under "black light" (infra-red) they glow up, seeming to acquire three dimensions – a vestige of psychedelia.

In the American rock industry, New Wave posters have become a currency. Of an edition of 250, the concert promoter and the band usually get 10-20 per cent each, instead of cash, in lieu of logo royalties. The rest are sold by the publisher. The few that are displayed to advertise the gig (newspaper ads do the rest) are usually locked in window displays in record shops.

Squabbling over who should get posters has reached such a pitch that Mark Armistead, another ArtRock artist, is being simultaneously sued by the Dave Matthews Band and Phish for allegedly selling some of the posters he designed for them. In London, Bonhams' Ted Owen is offering

Collect to Invest: never mind the pharmacology, catch the New Wave ahead of the crowd, says John Windsor

15 of Forbes's signed artists' proofs, mostly estimated £150-£250, in his second annual sale of rock posters and original rock art, High Art, on 5 May. He has put an estimate of £200-£300 on Forbes's 11-colour *It All Went South*, advertising an exhibition of his in Los Angeles earlier this year.

The handful of New Wave posters that appeared in Bonhams' first High Art sale, last September, must have mystified British bidders. Only one of nine posters by Frank Kozik, an established New Wave name, found a buyer. Two posters by the artist Coop, top New Wave before Forbes came on the scene, offered in separate lots, were unsold. A third lot by Coop – eight posters – made £483 (estimate £200-£300). The only Forbes lot, 11 posters, fetched £230 (estimate £140-£200). Whoever bought them is unlikely to buy Forbes as cheaply again. Kozik is back in next month's sale – top estimate £800-£1,000.

The V&A is laying in New Wave posters and also British posters by the Hapshash and the Coloured Coat combo – Nigel Waymouth and Michael English. They earned a permanent

place in rock history by designing posters for the UFO Club at the Saville Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, where Pink Floyd and Traffic had their beginnings – and where Jimi Hendrix staged his first big British gig in October 1967.

The Hapshash poster for Hendrix's debut fetched £863 at Bonhams in September against an optimistic estimate of £800-£1,200.

Hapshash poster prices are likely to go on rising (there are 20 or so, estimated around £200, in Bonhams' May sale). In fact, psychedelic posters from both sides of the Atlantic seem under-valued. First printings of historic hippie posters by such big-name artists as Rick Griffin, Victor Moscoso and Stanley Mouse can still be bought at Bonhams for under £200. The bands included the Grateful Dead, the Doors and Jefferson Airplane.

As the debate over legalisation of drugs intensifies, the first psychedelic revival seems all the more imminent. But never mind the pharmacology, look at the art. Cash in on New Wave before the rest do, but for long-term investment put your trust in the freaky world of LSD.

Classic guide to poster editions: *A Collector's Guide to the Numbered Dance Posters, Created For Bill Graham and the Family Dog, 1966-1973* by Eric King, Berkeley: Syuka Press 1980. *High Art auction, 5 May (11am)*, Bonhams, Montpelier Street, London SW7 (0171-393 3900). *ArtRock, 115 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94103, USA*

INTERNET INVESTOR

Ten years ago the one pound note ceased to be legal tender, replaced by the one pound coin which, according to some, looks like a refugee from a chocolate money set. Others, grinding a political axe, then called the new coin the "Maggie" because, they said, it was thick, brassy and had pretensions to being a sovereign. Now we stand on the brink of the demise of sterling itself within a few short years as the Government dithers about its commitment to the single European currency.

However, the arguments for and against the euro, which centre on ease of trade across frontiers weighed against loss of sovereignty, may themselves be rendered academic in just a few years. David Errington, the new chief technology officer at Sage, the UK's largest accounting software company, is predicting the demise of money itself by 2010.

He forecasts: "The growth of electronic commerce will



ROBIN AMLOT

eliminate the need to deal with tangible money for business transactions.

"I believe that money, as we know it today, will become redundant by 2010."

Some 300,000 small and medium-sized businesses use Sage's software and there can be no doubt that, if they all migrated their goods and services on to the web, it would significantly change the way the rest of us shopped, worked and played. However, it takes a brave man to claim money will disappear entirely. Cash is far too useful for those people who prefer not to leave a transaction trail.

Nevertheless, electronic banking is one of the fastest-

As more people bank on the net, some firms are banking on a cashless future

growing areas of the on-line world. The Co-operative Bank now offers all its personal current account and credit card customers the option of a full on-line internet banking service. As a come-on, the bank is offering anybody who registers for the service before 30 May the chance to enter a competition with a prize of £5,000-worth of computer equipment vouchers.

Co-op Bank account-holders with net access can run an account on-line incurring no extra charges from the bank, though they will still have to pay normal internet connection fees and phone charges. You can view

account balances and current-historic statement information, transfer funds from one account to another, change standing orders, cancel direct debits and order a cheque book or paying in book, together with other routine transactions.

The Co-op's site was developed using software designed by the German company Brokat. Its on-line transaction technology is now being used by over 1,400 banks, discount brokers, insurance companies and investment firms. The security system requires you to register a security pass code and secure personal information (SPI) with the Bank via a free telephone call before using the service for the first time.

The SPI will be five pieces of memorable information, such as names and dates which only you would be able to know. Internet users will be asked to confirm any one of the five SPI items plus their security pass code. Failure to

do so aborts the internet access and you will be asked to contact the bank by telephone.

Co-op also has plans to introduce a palm-top version of its net banking site, which should be available within the next month or so. The bank appears committed to staying at the forefront of consumer technological choice. It may prove to be a wise business decision in the face of a coming upheaval in banking. US banks now count their customer base in the tens and hundreds of millions in the wake of recent mega deals. The round of takeovers and mergers may soon be reflected among Britain's banks.

However, the excitement in the financial sector has

brought a potential problem of its own as a result of soaring share prices. The New York Stock Exchange's Dow Jones Industrial Average index has traded into record territory well above the 9,000 level and the more optimistic analysts are now forecasting further records above 10,000 by the end of the year. Yet, if this does happen, some of the computer systems used on Wall Street may have the software equivalent of hysterics, since they were designed with the assumption that the index would always be a four-figure number!

Brokat: www.brokat.com
Co-operative Bank: www.cooperativebank.co.uk
Sage: www.sage.com

STANDARD LIFE BANK

A first-rate savings account.

7.30%
NO NOTICE REQUIRED

- Excellent tiered rates of interest.
- No notice required and no penalties.
- No minimum or maximum deposit.
- No limit on the number of withdrawals.

0345 55 56 57
Saving has never been simpler

PHONE LINES OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-6PM, SATURDAY 8AM-5PM

Terms and Conditions available on request. *Gross p.a. - the rate of interest paid yearly without deduction of lower rate tax to eligible non-taxpayers. The rate quoted applies to balances of £50,000 and over. Rates may vary. Standard Life Bank Limited is a company registered in Scotland (number SC177825). Registered Office: Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1 2DH. Standard Life Bank Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Standard Life Assurance Company and is a member of the Standard Life Group of companies. For your protection, telephone calls will be monitored. We may also monitor telephone calls to help us improve customer service. Standard Life Bank Limited is a member of the Deposit Protection Scheme established under the Banking Act 1987 (as amended). Payments under the Scheme are limited to 90% of a depositor's total deposits subject to a maximum payment to any one depositor of £100,000 for ECU 20,000 or greater. Further details of the Scheme are available on request.

JOIN THE WORLD'S N°1

FOR A FEW DOLLARS LESS.

SPECIAL OFFER ON OUR HIGH-PERFORMING MONEYBUILDER PEPS.

TAX-FREE MONEYBUILDER RANGE

For a limited period until May 29, we're reducing the minimum investment in our low-cost MoneyBuilder PEPS from £3,000 to just £1,000, so you can buy a PEP now.

This allows you to take full advantage of any tax-free growth or income in the financial year ahead. And you can add to your PEP throughout the year from £100 a time.

Choose MoneyBuilder Growth or MoneyBuilder Index for long-term capital growth, MoneyBuilder Plus for international diversification, or MoneyBuilder Income for low-risk, tax-free returns.

MoneyBuilder PEPS combine a terrific record of performance with a great reputation for value.

There are no charges for buying, selling, or switching between funds in the range.

You can even phase your investment over six months to help

smooth out market volatility. And your money's available any time.

Add this to the stockpiled good performance that got us voted Best Unit Trust Group 1997 by Microplan, and you'll see why you should phone, send the coupon or speak to your IFA now.

And find out about the PEPS that are going great guns.

To: Fidelity Investments, PO Box 88, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9DZ. Phone 0800 41 41 71. Please send me information on Fidelity's MoneyBuilder Range. We will not disclose any information outside the Fidelity Marketing Group.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Tel _____

SS1

Fidelity Investments

WHERE 12 MILLION INVESTORS PUT THEIR TRUST

*Other than the effect of the bid-offer spread, which should not exceed 0.75%, past performance is no guarantee of future returns. The value of investments and income from them can go down as well as up and an investor may not get back the amount invested. Resources and assets are as at 28/2/98, and include investments of F&M Corp, a US company and its affiliates. 10% fee credit on dividends will be reclaimable within a PEP or an ISA from April 1999 for five years. No PEP investments may be made after April 1999, but existing PEPs can continue to grow tax-free. The value of tax savings and eligibility to invest in a PEP or ISA will depend upon individual circumstances and all the rules may change in the future. Fidelity only provides information about its products and will not give investment advice. Issued by Fidelity Investments Ltd, regulated by IMRO and the Personal Investment Authority. CB2866

THE PEP TO END ALL PEPS.

| SAVE & PROSPER GROWTH FUND | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Initial PEP charge | Average annual growth |
| 0%* | 25.6%† |

*Subject to 0.5% Government Stamp Duty.

The end may be nigh for PEPS, but there's still time to take advantage of our top performing Growth Fund. And you don't need a large lump sum to do it. Our regular savings plan lets you invest monthly (anything between £50 and £500) right up to April next year. There are no extra costs for investing this way. No initial charges (except 0.5% Government Stamp Duty). And in recent times our Growth Fund has delivered average annual growth of 25.6%*. So, if you want to 'maximise your tax-free savings, don't delay. The sooner you call, the sooner your money can start earning.

LINES OPEN 8am TO 9pm, 7 DAYS A WEEK.

0800 829 400
SAVE & PROSPER
www.prosper.co.uk

†Based on buying to selling price with gross income reinvested since relaunch on 24.05.96 to 02.03.98. Five years: 20.3% p.a. Source: Microplan. Growth Fund (formerly Scottish) changed investment objective on 24.5.96. The value of investments, and any income from them, can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the amount invested. Tax concessions are not guaranteed; their value will depend on individual circumstances. Exchange rates may also affect performance. Past performance is not a guide to future returns. It has been announced that from 6th April 1999 it will not be possible to invest in a PEP. In the meantime you will not be disadvantaged by investing in a PEP. Save & Prosper is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. We only advise on products and services offered by the Fidelity and Save & Prosper Marketing Group. 1978/02/1

THE INDEPENDENT
Free guide to
Direct Pensions
Sponsored by
A 36 page guide telling you everything you need
to know to plan for your retirement
For your free copy
Ring 0800 77 66 66



**BRIAN
TORA**

Banking on mega-mergers

It is easy to dislike banks. Large, impersonal, for ever bearing down on the small customer - I doubt there are many of us who have not had reason to complain about the level of service received from their bank at some time.

Well, banks are in the news at present. And it looks likely that some will not be around for much longer. In the past, they have been a protected species. The Glass Steagall Act in the US limited how banks could operate. This legislation could be challenged in Congress later this year.

On Wall Street, bank mergers have been making big news. Bank of America is getting together with NationsBank while First Chicago is beating a path to the altar with BancOne, continuing the consolidation of US banking that is expected to be repeated here. The Citicorp and Travelers Group deal is in another league entirely, though.

Citigroup, as the new massive combine is to be unimaginatively named, represents the new face of global financial services. One stop financial shopping world-wide is the aim. One hundred million customers from 100 countries is just the starting point.

There must be plenty of competitors who will not wish to be left behind. In the US, speculation is rife that this is the first of a whole series of marriages which will change the face of international banking. Here in the UK, the flurry of excitement was more short-lived. Some larger banks, like HSBC, attracted investor attention as analysts sought to determine which might form part of new global groupings. It did not last for long, though. Even more surprisingly, there was no knock-on effect to send shares of smaller banks skyward.

I find the market's muted

reaction surprisingly mature. After all, what contribution can Northern Rock or Alliance & Leicester make in the global market place? Some consolidation in our crowded banking sector must be inevitable, but it seems the markets could not find any enthusiasm for copying the American fashion of target spotting.

From a fundamental view, this reflects the more difficult conditions that exist in UK banking. Margins on mortgage lending have fallen steadily, which will affect profitability. Moreover, as a colleague of mine remarked this week, you should never underestimate banks' ability to unearth a disaster from somewhere, even when things are going well.

The lack of froth in markets suggest investors are worried about valuation levels. A report earlier this week claimed that mutual fund purchases by individuals were at an all time high, both here and the US. It could be a case of Joe Public getting in at the top again.

In the meantime, Birmingham Midshires is toying with the idea of floating on the stock market to solve the apparent dilemma of Halifax offering a cool £150m more than Royal Bank of Scotland, but it is hard to imagine an independent Birmingham Midshires being worth as much as Halifax is prepared to pay.

Cost cutting and rationalisation must deliver a better return to Halifax than even Royal Bank of Scotland could achieve - and some of that cost cutting will probably include the Birmingham Midshires' board of directors. Flotation must be looking pretty attractive from a Midlands perspective.

Brian Tora is the chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee.

BEST BORROWING RATES

| Telephone | % Rate and period | Min. pay | Inc. |
|--|-------------------------|--|--|
| MORTGAGES | | | |
| FIXED RATES | | | |
| Scarsborough BS | 0250 138149 | 0.05% for 1 year | 95% 0.75% FreeMIP for up to 80% LTV |
| Principality BS | 0800 163817 | 5.49% to 30.01 | 95% £250 No high lending fee (MIP) |
| Northern Rock | 0845 605 0500 | 5.89% to 13.00 | 95% £250 No MIP for up to 80% LTV |
| VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES | | | |
| Harley & Rugby BS | 0800 774499 | 0.10% for 1 year | 80% £250 Free MIP, £250 fee refund |
| First Mortgage | 0800 080088 | 4.44% to 30.00 | 75% £250 |
| Northern Rock | 0845 605 0500 | 5.05% to 13.01 | 95% - Refund of value tax |
| FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0845 605 0500 | 3.80% to 13.00 | 95% £250 No MIP for up to 80% LTV |
| Halifax | 0800 101110 | 5.75% to 31.01 | 90% £105 No high lending fee (MIP) |
| Northern Rock | 0800 303070 | 6.10% for 5 years | 95% £250 No high lending fee |
| FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES | | | |
| Woodchase | 0845 757575 | 5.70% for 1 year | 95% £195 2.5% of advance related |
| First Mortgage | 0800 080088 | 5.50% to 30.01 | 90% £250 |
| Northern Rock | 0800 303070 | 6.80% for 5 years | 95% £250 Refund of value tax |
| UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS | | | |
| Telephone | APR % | Fixed monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs | With insurance |
| UNSECURED | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0345 421421 | 8.9% H | £183.12 £198.11 |
| Yorkshire Bank | 0800 202121 | 12.5% A | £190.33 £185.77 |
| Direct Line | 0181 680 9966 | 12.5% A | £183.75 £186.38 |
| SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE) | | | |
| Telephone | APR % | Min. LTV Advance | Term |
| Chylands Bank | 0800 240024 | 9.7% | Reg. £2K to £15K 5 years to 25 years |
| Royal Bank of Scotland | 0800 121121 | 10.7% | 70% £2.5K to £100K 3 years to 10 years |
| First Direct | 0345 100103 | 11.2% | 80% £2K to Reg. Up to 40 years |
| OVERDRAFTS | | | |
| Telephone | Account | % p.a. | APR |
| Albion & Leicester | 0800 959595 | Advance | 0.50% 12.00% 2.20% 28.0% |
| Bank of Scotland | 0800 804084 | Direct charge | 0.50% 11.00% 25.0% |
| Northern Rock | 0800 303070 | Financing | 0.50% 12.25% 2.10% 26.25% |
| CREDIT CARDS | | | |
| Telephone | Card Type | Rate % p.a. | APR |
| Capital One Bank | 0800 666000 | Visa | 0.50% 6.50% 18.0% 34 days |
| RBS Advance | 0800 777770 | Visa | 0.50% 11.50% 18.0% 55 days |
| Co-operative Bank | 0800 100000 | Advance Visa | 0.50% 6.50% 18.0% 0 days |
| GOLD CARDS | | | |
| Capital One Bank | 0800 666000 | Visa | 0.50% 6.50% 18.0% 34 days £20K |
| Co-operative Bank | 0800 777770 | Visa | 0.50% 11.50% 18.0% 55 days £20K |
| RBS Advance | 0800 777770 | Visa | 0.50% 6.50% 18.0% 55 days £20K |
| STORE CARDS | | | |
| Telephone | Payment by direct debit | % p.a. | APR |
| John Lewis | Via store | 1.20% | 18.0% |
| Debenhams | Via store | 1.50% | 20.0% |
| Marshall & Spencer | 01544 661881 | 1.50% | 20.0% |

BEST SAVINGS RATES

| | Telephone number | Accounts | Notice of term | Deposit | Rate % | Interest estimate |
|--|------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| INSTANT ACCESS | | | | | | |
| Chylands Bank | 0800 445028 | Savings | Instant | £1 | 5.75% | Day |
| Woodchase | 0800 222200 | Card Saver | Instant | £50 | 5.50% | Year |
| Northern Rock | 0800 303070 | Branch Select Interest | Instant | £1,000 | 5.50% | Year |
| Leeds & Halifax BS | 0845 223777 | Premises Account | Instant | £5,000 | 7.00% | Year |
| INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS | | | | | | |
| Standard Life Bank | 0345 555557 | Direct Access | Account (F) | £1 | 5.95% | Year |
| Scottish Widows Bank | 0845 245 0525 | Instant Access | Account (B) | £100 | 7.00% | Year |
| Safeway | 0800 303070 | Direct Savings | Account (B) | £1,000 | 7.00% | Year |
| Northern Rock | 0845 600 5767 | Save Direct Instant | Account (B) | £5,000 | 7.50% | Year |
| NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS | | | | | | |
| Scarsborough BS | 01723 500016 | Scarsborough 30 | 30 Day | £1,000 | 7.00% | Year |
| Stratford & Stratford | 0345 255423 | Direct Thrift | 30 Day (F) | £10,000 | 5.00% | Year |
| Legal & General Bank | 0800 111130 | 60 Direct A | 30 Day (F) | £10,000 | 5.00% | Year |
| Investment Bank (UK) | 0171 203 1850 | Basic Plus | 1 Year | £2,000 | 5.00% | Year |
| CHEQUE ACCOUNTS | | | | | | |
| Investment Bank (UK) | 0171 203 1850 | NCA 5000 | Instant | £5,000 | 6.50% | Month |
| Halifax | 0113 225 9220 | Active Reserve | Instant | £10,000 | 5.50% | City |
| Chylands Bank | 0800 445028 | Cheque Points | Instant | £10,000 | 5.70% | Year |
| Lombard Joseph | 0171 305 2323 | Instant Access | Instant | £16,000 | 6.70% | Year |
| FIXED RATE BONDS | | | | | | |
| Norwich & Peterborough | 01733 372222 | Fixed Rate Bond | 5 Months | £5,000 | 7.55% F | Month |
| Antoniades BS | 0500 303070 | Fixed Rate Bond | 1 Year | £1 | 7.40% F | Month |
| Portman BS | 0800 303070 | Branch Fixed Rate Bond | 1 Year | £500 | 7.55% F | Month |
| Peacocks Bank | 0800 573191 | Fixed Rate | 2 Year | £2,500 | 7.25% F | 2 Year |
| FIRST TESSAS | | | | | | |
| Norwich & Peterborough | 01733 372222 | | 5 Year | £100 | 8.00% | Year |
| Stratford & Stratford | 0345 255423 | | 5 Year | £500 | 8.00% | Year |
| Darlington BS | 01436 744505 | | 5 Year | £1,000 | 8.00% | Year |
| San Banking Corp | 01436 744505 | | 5 Year | £1,000 | 8.00% | Year |
| FOLLOW-ON TESSAS | | | | | | |
| Stratford & Stratford | 0345 255423 | Preference TESSA | 5 Year | £3,000 | 8.05% | Year |
| San Banking Corp | 01436 744505 | TESSA 2 Plus | 5 Year | £9,000 | 8.05% | Year |
| Norwich & Peterborough | 01733 372222 | | 5 Year | £100 | 8.00% | Year |
| Britannia BS | 0800 133304 | | 5 Year | £2,500 | 8.00% | Year |
| GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net) | | | | | | |
| GE Financial Assurance | 0161 380 3388 | | 1 Year | £10,000 | 6.25% F | Year |
| GE Financial Assurance | 0161 380 3388 | | 2 Year | £10,000 | 6.00% F | Year |
| ITV London & Ede | 01903 820820 | | 3 Year | £3,000 | 5.65% F | Year |
| ITV London & Ede | 01903 820820 | | 4 Year | £3,000 | 5.55% F | Year |
| ITV London & Ede | 01903 820820 | | 5 Year | £3,000 | 5.45% F | Year |
| OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross) | | | | | | |
| Britannia International | 01624 651165 | Cyprus West Direct | Instant | £10,000 | 7.00% | Year |
| Brink & West Ltd Ltd | 01778 807072 | Instant Access | Instant | £50,000 | 7.00% | Year |
| First National BS Guam | 01453 714500 | 60 Day Notice | 60 Day | £10,000 | 7.00% | Year |
| Birmingham MBS | 01453 706860 | Overseas 90 | 50 Day | £50,000 | 5.95% | Year |
| NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross) | | | | | | |
| Investment Accounts | | | 1 Month | £20 | 4.75% | Year |
| | | | | £500 | 5.00% | Year |
| | | | | £2,500 | 5.50% | Year |
| | | | | £5,000 | 5.75% | Year |
| | | | | £10,000 | 6.00% | Year |
| | | | | £25,000 | 6.25% | Year |
| | | | | £50,000 | 6.50% | Year |
| Income Bonds | | | 3 Month | £2,000 | 7.00% | Month |
| | | | | £25,000 | 7.25% | Month |
| Capital Bonds Series L | | | 5 Year | £100 | 8.00% F | Month |
| FPST Ogden Bonds | | | 12 Month | £1,000 | 8.50% F | Year |
| | | | | £20,000 | 8.75% F | Year |
| Prepayment Guaranteed Income Bond Series 5 | | | 5 Year | £500 | 6.10% F | Month |
| Childrens Bonds Issue 1 (On term) | | | 5 Year | £25 | 5.00% F | Month |
| B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System F = Fixed rate (all other rates variable) N = Net rate P = Pay only rate | | | | | | |
| All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677 | | | | | | |
| 16 April 1998 | | | | | | |



THE JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

It is now several years since the authors of *In Search of Excellence* elevated the slogan "Keep it simple, stupid" into one of the management catch phrases of the 1980s. The rest of the book's recipes for success may long since have gone the way of all management fads but I have not yet met a successful businessman who did not in practice observe the dictates of that one powerful command. The clear lesson of history is that, in a complex world, you overcomplicate at your peril. The more I study the techniques of

successful investors, the more convinced I become that the same command should be the watchword of anyone who wants to make the most of their money as well. Those who make the best investors are, by and large, the ones who have the greatest ability to see through all the noise and distractions of the day's activity in the markets and hold firm to a few, well-tried, common-sense precepts.

I was interested, therefore, to read this week a speech given by John Bogle, the founder of the Vanguard group, on this very theme of simplicity in investing. Vanguard, you may recall, is a mutually owned American fund management group which pioneered the spread of index tracking and other low-cost mutual funds in the United States.

Being outspoken and prone to telling his peers a few home truths about the way they do business, Mr Bogle is not always flavour of the month in the mutual fund industry. However, what he has to say to ordinary investors about the stock market is so long on common sense – and also so straightforward – that I make no apology for passing on some more of his advice. (I hasten to add that I have no vested interest in promoting Vanguard itself. If other fund managers chose to speak as much sense, their views

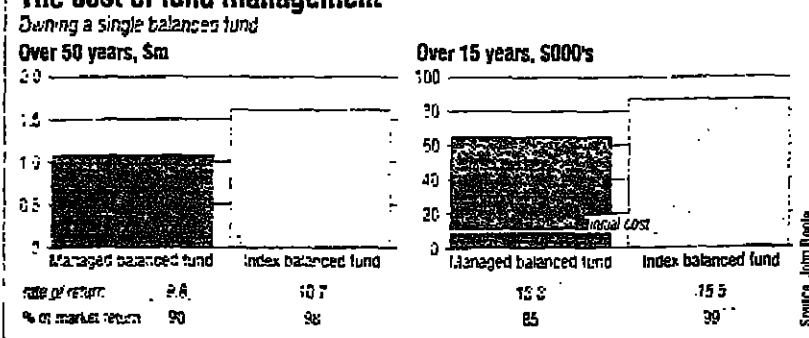
would be just as greatly appreciated.)

The first and most important "simple truth" that investors need to appreciate, Mr Bogle says, is the need to define their objectives realistically. They should start by accepting that they are not going to capture all the rewards of the asset class they have chosen to invest in (be that cash, bonds, property or the stock market). If you invest in a building society, you know you are not going to get the best money market rates.

Yet the same goes for shares: on average, you cannot expect to do as well as the stock market averages. The buying and selling costs and the charges levied by fund managers (if you use one) will inevitably see to that. What most investors should do, therefore, is start by aiming for something lower but more realistic – which is to capture as much of the potential return of the asset class they are in as they can.

If you accept that premise, index tracking funds are the logical starting place. The graphs show how that difference expresses itself over different lengths of time. A typical actively managed balanced mutual fund has captured 90 per cent of the market's returns over the past 50 years; a comparable low-cost tracker fund (with

The cost of fund management



the same split between equities and bonds) would have captured 98 per cent of the potential return.

Over the last 15 years, the disparity is greater still: the average actively managed fund has captured 85 per cent of the market's returns, against the average index tracking fund's 99 per cent. (The reason the gap between the two classes is wider in the shorter period is that the average cost deducted as a fee by fund management companies has gone up in the last 15 years.)

Because of our old friend compound interest, the difference that makes to the value of the fund at the end of the

period is striking. Suppose your original investment was £10,000; the value of the fund at the end of the period would be £500,000 more if you succeeded in capturing the extra 8 per cent of the market's performance over that time. Over the past 15 years, the difference in the final value of your £10,000 investment would have come to around £21,000, or double your initial investment.

So tracking should be at the core of your strategy. Human nature being what it is, however, even Mr Bogle sensibly concedes that most people will not want to settle for such a dull but worthy objective alone. They will hold fast to

the notion that they may be the fortunate ones who can distinguish the best performing funds from the worst (and there are a minority of funds which do consistently outperform, if you know how to find them).

If you are one of those investors, I can only urge you to consider carefully the rest of Mr Bogle's advice. His first rule is: when in doubt, go for a low-cost fund over a more expensive one. Next, prefer those funds which have a low turnover rate of holdings: the lower the turnover, the lower the transaction costs you incur. (According to Vanguard, the turnover rate in US mutual funds has risen three-fold since the early 1990s.) Then, aim to buy directly if you can, avoiding sales commission to advisers.

When it comes to performance figures, treat all past performance statistics with healthy scepticism. Go for a consistently above average performer rather than an occasional top 10 appearance. Beware of star names – they are easy to identify in retrospect, but rarely in advance. Once you have made a well-researched choice, stick with the decision: don't chop and change. Finally, don't own too many different funds – after three or four, you are getting no additional diversification benefits.

UNDERSTANDING THE STOCK MARKET: JOHN ANDREW

Some profitable reading

Copy the analysts and keep abreast of the news that moves shares prices

Mankind has always had a healthy appetite for news. In the financial world, news is always eagerly digested and analysed. It is very important as the prices of stocks and shares respond both upwards and downwards to information, rumours and opinions.

It is by being informed that investors are able to enhance their prospects of making money. It is not just new opportunities that you should be on the look out for, but also any developments relating to companies in which you have shares.

Even when a company is doing well, stockbrokers may recommend selling its shares purely because they consider investors could do even better by investing in one of its rivals. Other reasons for selling include poor prospects because of mismanagement, a decline in the demand for the goods produced, increased competition in the industry or simply because its share price has risen higher than its future prospects suggest is a sensible level.

Analysts at stockbrokers, of course, spend all their time researching companies' progress. They attend presentations given by the organisations and can ask directors and executives questions. They not only analyse a company's results in a depth, but they monitor the markets companies operate in and look at the effect of economic indicators on individual organisations.

So, what can we do as small shareholders? Let us start with monitoring the price of the shares we hold. You can check prices each morning in *The Independent's* shares page. However, remember that these are a snap shot at a particular moment in time – at the close of business on the previous working day. Share prices fluctuate constantly throughout a trading day.

You can use *The Independent's* Teleshare service to obtain the current price. Details of how this operates and the charges are on the shares page. Alternatively, you can access one of the TV text services, where share prices are updated several times a day.

Derek Pain's Market Report, which features on our shares page, is an excellent place to get an overall daily view of the mar-



Top tips: market reports in the press give a daily view of the City

ket. Written in an easy to read, yet informative style, it is not just concerned with what has happened. It also includes *Taking Stock*, a column which includes useful snippets that could reveal an opportunity you may like to explore further.

Both TV and radio have slots which are good for general updates on UK business news, international market reports and news stories. For early birds there is *Business Breakfast* at 6am on BBC1 Monday through to Friday. Business news also features throughout the day during the regular news programmes on both radio and on TV.

Then there are specialist publications. *The Investors' Chronicle* contains buy and sell tips; a summary of brokers' recommendations; a brief analysis of results; a market view and a range of features covering everything from personal finance to traded options. It is published each Friday at £2.50. Annual subscriptions cost £12, but look out for special offers if you decide to subscribe.

If your interests are in unit and investment trusts, there are also monthly per-

sonal finance magazines worth considering, for example, *Personal Finance* (£2.60); *Bloomberg Money* (£2.95); *Moneywise* (£2.70); *What Investment* (£2.75) and *Money Management* (£5.50).

Then, of course, there are commercial investment newsletters too numerous to list here. You will have no trouble finding their advertisements in the financial press. However, remember that no tip is infallible. Use any tip, wherever it is published, as a guide and do your own research.

Also, be aware that one stockbroker's "buy" can be another broker's "sell" the next week. Needless to say, you will have to make up your own mind as to whom to follow, as it is not prudent to change strategy on a regular basis. As the saying goes: "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

For a copy of the ProShare 'Investor Update: Where to Get Share Information' send a stamped addressed envelope to: ProShare Investor Updates, 13-14 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5BQ.

The All-Share Tracking PEP that has performed the best

INVEST NOW
to make the most of your final year's PEP allowance

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH* NOV 95 TO APRIL 98

| PROVIDER | ANNUAL MANAGEMENT CHARGE | GROWTH |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Legal & General | 0.50% | 74.38% |
| Dresdner RCM | 0.50% | 72.87% |
| Gauntmore | 1.00% | 72.79% |
| Virgin | 1.00% | 72.68% |
| Average UK Income & Growth Trust | - | 60.81% |

NO initial charges
NO withdrawal fee
0.5% annual management charge

Visit our web site at www.LandG.com

Find out more now –
phone free

0500 11 66 22

8am to 8pm weekdays,
9am to 5pm weekends.

Please quote ref: C&DJ26

Since its launch over two years ago this Index-Tracking PEP from Legal & General has proved that it offers PEP investors superb performance and value.

It follows the FTSE All-Share Index. This Index reflects the performance of the entire stockmarket, so it reduces the risk of being over-exposed to shares which under-perform and lessen your return. In fact, a lump sum of £8,000 invested in this PEP at launch would now be worth £10,402* compared to just £9,048* in the average UK Income & Growth Trust.

With no initial charges deducted, more of your money is invested at the outset for maximum growth potential, there are no withdrawal fees and with an annual management charge of 0.5% – the value for money is outstanding. So make the most of today's opportunities. For further details (including information on our monthly saving option) call now.

YES I would like more information about the Legal & General Index-Tracking PEP. Please send me a copy of the prospectus. I am interested in the Legal & General Index-Tracking PEP. I am interested in the Legal & General Index-Tracking PEP. I am interested in the Legal & General Index-Tracking PEP.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____
Tel: _____
Fax: _____



Pensions made simple.

You can pick up the phone and get pensions information or advice and even set up a plan, quickly and without fuss.

Call: 8am-10pm, 7 days a week quoting ref: 288D125
0345 6789 10
or talk to your Independent Financial Adviser.



SCOTTISH WIDOWS
Looking good for your pension.

HOW TO BORROW TO PAY EDUCATION BILLS

- If there is some capital in the house, see if you can raise a first or second mortgage. Some lenders offer special deals.
- A personal loan is another possibility. But it is expensive, with few lenders charging much less than 13 per cent APR on loans over £10,000.
- Some gold cards allow substantial borrowings. NatWest's card allows up to £10,000, with interest levied at 3 points over base rates and a minimum charge of 10 per cent.
- If you have a with-profits endowment, you may be able to borrow up to the level of the bonuses already attached to it. Ask your life company. Scottish Widows also lends on other companies' policies.

WITH-PROFITS BOND

A worry-free investment offering the best of both worlds.

Security and Potential Capital Growth
If that sounds like your dream come true, then The Equitable With-Profits Bond is a winning combination for your investments. With £500 you can invest in a managed fund of assets, which smooths the short-term fluctuations in value over the period of your investment.

So, you can strike a balance between keeping your savings safe in a building society, but possibly eroded by inflation, and the potentially lucrative but more risky option of investment in equities.

And, as part of your medium to long-term investment plans, The Equitable With-Profits Bond can play an important and profitable part.

Of course, the final value of the investment is not guaranteed. You also have the reassurance and peace of mind which comes from dealing with The Equitable Life, the world's oldest mutual life office.

If you would like more information on achieving the best of both worlds with The Equitable With-Profits Bond, call (0490) 38 48 58, or return the coupon below for details by post and by telephone.

www.equitable.co.uk

For your security, your telephone call may be recorded.
Information advice will only be given on Equitable group products.
Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority.

The Equitable Life With-Profits Bond is a long-term investment. It is not a deposit and its value will fluctuate. It is not a guarantee of return. It is not a substitute for insurance. It is not a replacement for a pension. It is not a replacement for a life insurance policy. It is not a replacement for a life insurance policy.

NAME (Mr/Ms/Ms)
ADDRESS
Tel (Office)
Tel (Home)
Date of Birth

The Equitable Life
You profit from our principles

University challenge

A levels are only one of the hurdles facing students wanting to go to college, writes Tony Lyons

I consider myself one of the lucky ones. Many years ago, I decided to go to university and get a degree. Coming from a home where there was little money did not worry me as I was able to get a full student grant from my local authority. While not enough to pay for a riotous time of good living and beer swilling, it did at least provide enough to cover my basic needs of food and lodgings, with the odd pound or two left over for a cheap night out.

Nowadays, matters are very different. The last thing students need to have on their minds as they revise for A levels is worrying about how they will be able to survive if they do well and go on to a place at university.

Yet a high proportion of the 800,000-plus expected to go into higher education this autumn will be unprepared for the costs involved. Latest estimates are that it will cost around £15,000 to £18,000 per child for the three years they will be studying for a degree. If they go to a Scottish university, where many of the courses take four years, it can cost a third more. On top of this, there will also be tuition fees and most universities and colleges will charge the full £1,000 a year.

The maximum grant has been fixed for a number of years at £1,855 outside

London and at £2,340 in London for students living away from home. Fewer and fewer students qualify for any grant, let alone the full amount. If their parents have a joint income of over £16,050, the grant is reduced. Earn more than £32,500 after allowances and they will get no grant at all. Under a quarter of last year's student intake received a full grant while as many as one-third got nothing at all.

There are special student loans available. But even borrowing the maximum will not make up the shortfall that the student needs to live on. Banks and building societies are keen to offer students "cheap" overdrafts. Typical is Halifax, which permits them to have "interest-free" overdrafts up to £500 in the first year, £750 in the second, and £1,000 in the third. But the loans have to be repaid after they qualify.

If the student is going to Liverpool or one of the other cheaper university towns, the National Union of Students estimates that they will need at least £4,300 a year for reasonable expenditure, board, lodgings and books. More expensive towns will cost at least another £1,000 a year.

Most parents have to contribute to student expenses out of income as too few think to start a savings plan early



Degrees in debt: students will need at least £4,300 a year for reasonable expenditure

enough to pay for higher education. This can put a hefty dent in the wage packet. There are ways of reducing the impact but none is cheap.

If there is sufficient free capital value in the house, it can be used to raise a first or second mortgage. Some institutions offer special deals on money borrowed to pay for education.

A personal loan is another possibility. But this is relatively expensive, with most high street banks charging at least 18 per cent in interest rates.

An alternative for those with gold credit cards is to use the low-cost loans that some offer. These cards are

usually available only to those earning over £20,000 a year.

If you have a with-profits endowment policy, money can be borrowed from your insurance company. Most insurers offer loans at reasonable rates, with the capital being repaid out of the policy's maturity value.

If you are looking a year or two ahead, it is not too late to start saving for university education. There are a couple of tax-efficient ways of building up a lump sum that will pay some, if not all, of the costs of college.

These can include national savings, where money can be saved tax free. You

could make use of personal equity plans (PEPs) while you can, and Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), when they start next April. However, share prices can fall as well as go up.

Alternatively, an offshore roll-up fund can be opened in the child's name. When he or she reaches 18 and goes on to university, the proceeds can be used to provide for their needs. Either regular savings or a lump sum can be invested. Income is rolled up gross of tax. When the child receives the returns, as they are unlikely to be earning enough to be liable for income tax, they will be tax free.

A crash course in raising funds to meet the costs of learning

The sooner you can start saving for your child's education the better. But if you did not plan ahead don't despair. There are a number of ways you may be able to meet the costs.

The first thing to remember is that you will not have the full education costs up front. Fees are usually due at the beginning of each term, so high earners may even be able to pay them out of their salaries. And even if your pay will not stretch to the full amount, you may be able to cover some of it out of your normal income.

It may also be possible to increase your income. If only one partner is working, the other may be able to re-

turn to work and boost the family income. Another possibility is to rent out a spare room. Under the rent a room scheme, you can let a room in your home and, providing the income is no more than £4,250 a year, it is tax free and does not even have to appear on your tax return. For more information, ask your local tax office for Inland Revenue leaflet IR87.

Another way you may be able to increase your income, suggests Edward Creasey, an independent financial adviser at Clark Conway, is through existing investments. "See if you can utilise any to provide you with an income. Personal equity plan (PEP) investors may be able to switch into income producing funds which would help them meet the costs of education. But be very wary about cashing in any investments," he says.

Only if you do not have sufficient income or investments to cover school fees, should you consider borrowing. Often it is possible to borrow against

a with-profits life assurance policy. As you do not have to cash it in, the policy will continue to grow in value and you will not lose out on any terminal bonus.

If your insurer will not lend against your policy you could try Scottish Widows Bank. It will lend against the policies of 36 insurance companies. The bank will lend up to 75 per cent of the surrender value, charging a competitive 3 per cent above base rate.

If you own or are buying your home, you could look to borrow against it. If you have a mortgage, see if your lender will give you a further advance. Or you could consider remortgaging altogether, suggests Simon

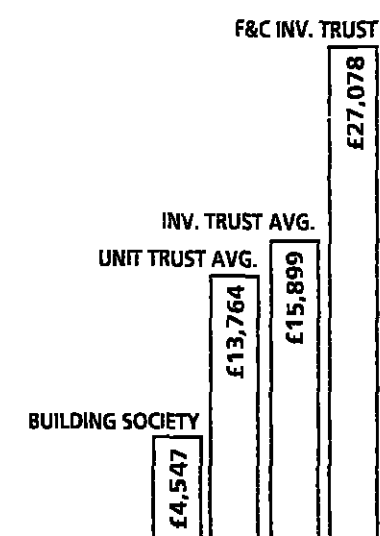
Tyler, managing director of Chase de Vere Mortgage Management. He points out that remortgaging and borrowing, say, an extra £20,000 could be cheaper than sticking with your existing lender.

Another option worth considering is one of the new flexible mortgages. These vary, but those offering a cheque book facility and drawdown option, such as Bank of Scotland's Mortgage Trust and Scottish Widows Bank's, may be the answer.

If you don't own your home you could look at personal loans. But do shop around and compare interest rates as they vary enormously.

There's more to life than making money.

GROWTH OF £1,000 OVER 20 YEARS



Many believe investing on the stock market is fraught with stress and insomnia. But there is a way to do this without losing sleep. Investment trusts, invented by us nearly 130 years ago, invest in many shares and sectors, so spreading risk. Our business and expertise is built upon making money on the stock market. Our long-term performance track record proves our success. The Private Investor Plan, our regular savings scheme, makes investing simple and inexpensive: you can set it up and forget about it - and lead a normal life. Spare a moment now to call for a brochure.

Phone 0181 880 8120 or Fax 0181 211 8777 anytime quoting the coupon code, or return the coupon.

Foreign & Colonial

To: Foreign & Colonial Management Ltd, PO Box 11020, London N4 1UA. Please send me information on:
PLEASE PRINT ☐ Private Investor Plan ☐ PEP

Title Initial Surname
Address
Postcode Code P049A

The value of shares and the income from them can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the full amount invested. Past performance is no guide to the future. All figures sourced Microcap: 31.12.77-31.12.97. Investment trust figures basis: mid-market prices, net income reinvested, incl. historical 3.5% notional expenses. (Actual Plan charges: 0.2% commission and 0.5% Govt. Stamp Duty). Building Society figure basis: highest net rate available (UK Savings £25,000+ Account) total return, net income reinvested. Unit Trust figures basis: offer to offer, net income reinvested, incl. historical 5.5% notional expenses. PEP tax benefits may vary as a result of statutory changes. Foreign & Colonial Management Limited (regulated by IMRO and the Personal Investment Authority) or its subsidiaries are the Managers of the investment trusts.

1%
Discount till
30 April 1998

FINANCIAL FUND & PEP

Don't settle for second best



TOP 1% OF ALL UNIT TRUSTS
for the last 11 years & since launch*

Framlington Financial Fund has a record of consistent outperformance. Over the last five years, a £1,000 investment would have grown by 161% to £2,619*

+30%
in
1997

We believe that 1998 will be another excellent year for the Fund because the arguments for investment in the financial sector are as strong as ever.

Before you make this year's PEP decision, ask your Financial Adviser for details or ring

0345 023138



Richard Peirson, manager of the Framlington Financial Fund

Please send me details of the Framlington Financial Fund and PEP. Return the coupon to:
Framlington Unit Management Limited, Freepost, P.O. Box 2, Turyford, Reading, Berkshire RG10 8BR.

NAME

ADDRESS

Postcode

If you do not wish to receive details of Framlington products in future, please tick the box ☐

IN 18/4/98 FF

* Source: Microcap, offer to bid, net income reinvested to 1 April 1998. Launch date 13 October 1986. Issued by Framlington Unit Management Limited, member of the Framlington Marketing Group. Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. Member of AUTIF. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up and investors may not get back the amount originally invested. Changes in exchange rates will affect the value of the Fund's overseas investments. Investment in single sector funds offers the possibility of higher returns but may also involve a higher degree of risk. The Government has announced that from 1999 tax advantaged schemes, such as PEPs and TESSAs, will be replaced with a new Individual Savings Account (ISA). PEP investments made prior to this date will have the same tax advantages as ISAs, including the right to 10% tax credit until 5 April 2004.

framlington

هكذا من الامم

From the cradle to the graduation ceremony: how to get an early advantage

Education is an expensive business. If you have good state schools where you live, you are lucky. Most parents wanting their children to have the best education will think of sending them to a private school but, unless they have very high earnings, that means saving for education as soon as possible.

"Early planning is the key," stresses Simon Holt, managing director of Skipton Financial Services, an independent financial adviser. "But, sadly, many parents flushed with the pride of parenthood and wanting to do their best for their children

Parents need to plan ahead for fees, warns Simon Read

find the costs of saving out of income are at odds with the expense a new child brings along."

According to the specialist advisers, School Fees Associated, paying for an 11-year-old at an average school for seven years is likely to cost £50,000 to £60,000. According to Skipton Financial Services, typical day fees at a non-boarding senior school are at least £1,000 a term, with top schools

charging much more. Prep schools can be £800 a term upwards. Boarding schools start at around £2,500 a term.

So what kind of savings should parents be considering now? Mr Holt suggests tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas), personal equity plans (PEPs) and the new Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) when they come along next year. "PEPs carry higher risks than deposits, but long-term

the rewards should be better," he says. "Lower-risk PEPs could include the GT Income PEP. For those attracted to higher-risk foreign markets, Fidelity's Triple Performance PEP could be an answer."

However, worries about the high level of equity markets at home and news of crashing economies in the Far East may encourage parents to consider less risky options like Tessas or other building society savings accounts.

An insurance company savings plan, like endowment policy, is much less flexible but

can offer better returns than simple deposit accounts. Mr Holt suggests a with-profits or unit-linked plan from a reputable company such as Standard Life. "These plans can be tailored to mature when school fees are expected to fall due," he says.

A drawback with endowment plans is that they should be kept up for their full period to get the best value out of them. So if you change your mind about education for your child, you should continue paying premiums until the pre-set maturity date or you could lose a lot of your investment.

"As in most long-term planning processes, a balance of products is likely to be best," advises Mr Holt. He suggests three factors should be considered when making financial plans: the state of parents' existing finances; when fees are likely to be needed and how much risk the parents want to take with the underlying investments used to fund the cost.

An independent financial adviser will be able to assist you through the planning process and make appropriate recommendations.

Scholarship schemes

Private schools are looking at ways to replace the loss of assisted places.
By Richard Shackleton

Scarcely has an election pledge been honoured so quickly. Within weeks of winning last May's general election Labour moved on its manifesto commitment to end "assisted places" in the independent education sector. An emergency bill was rushed through Parliament to abolish the scheme, which helps pay up to £10,000 of the fees for bright children from modest backgrounds to attend otherwise unaffordable private schools.

Despite protests and a court challenge, ministers have agreed to continue funding for existing secondary school pupils until they finish sixth form at 18. But those in preparatory schools must leave the scheme before transferring to secondary education.

Withdrawal of the scheme has forced the independent schools sector into feverish activity. Head teachers are looking to set up their own assisted-places schemes, releasing resources from long dormant endowments and establishing fund-raising campaigns. They are worried that unless they continue to attract the clever pupils who win assisted places, they will tumble down the academic league tables as they become more socially exclusive.

Manchester Grammar School is setting up a £10m foundation to support more than 300 pupils – the number at present winning government-assisted places at the school. Monmouth School and Monmouth School for Girls, run by the Haberdashers' Company, have raised a £42m fund to pay for 212 assisted places – costing £1m a year – by selling property left to them in 1614. Most ambitious



King's scholarships have been offered at Eton since 1440
Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

for children of former pupils. Had Tony Blair wanted to send a son to his old school, Fettes College in Edinburgh, he could have hoped for a Todd scholarship, which is for children of Old Fettesians. Others reserve scholarships or exhibitions for children of the clergy or members of the armed forces.

There are also scholarships reserved for children from certain regions. Keil School in Dumfries offers Foundation bursaries to pupils in the "counties of benefit": Argyll, Bute, Inverness, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland. Clifton College in Bristol offers a scholarship to children of newspaper journalists who work in Avon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire or Dorset.

There are also many scholarships for children who are gifted in non-academic pursuits – art, drama, music and sport. Several schools offer the new breed of so-called "all-rounder" scholarships, including Downside School, Millfield School and Uppingham.

Useful contacts: Independent Schools Information Service: 56, Buckingham Gate, London SW1. Telephone: 0171-630 8793. ISIS also offers a search facility on its website: "www.isis.org.uk".

For the annual guide "Music Awards at Independent Schools": The Music Masters and Mistresses Association, Three Ways, Chicks Lane, Kildown, Cranbrook, Kent. Telephone: 01892 890537.

For details of places for chorists at choir schools: The Choir Schools Association, The Minster School, Deangate, York YO1 2JA. Telephone: 01904 625217.

of all, the Girls' Public Day School Trust has launched a £70m scholarship scheme to save all 3,000 of its assisted places.

In the long run, according to the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC), which represents the top public schools, some 10,000 scholarships will be available to children from underprivileged families.

Meanwhile, schools are preserving, even augmenting, the number and variety of scholarships awarded purely on merit. Most scholarships are academic, and most are awarded on the basis of achievement in a school's own entrance

examination or, in the case of HMC schools, in special scholarship examinations taken in February, March or May. Most offer up to 50 per cent off the school's fees, conforming to a gentleman's agreement designed to stop rich schools poaching the best pupils.

Beyond this, there is an infinite variety of scholarships. Some date back centuries. King's scholarships at Eton have been offered since the college's foundation by Henry VI in 1440. Others are "closed" – as opposed to "open" – and limited to certain categories of pupil. Several schools reserve scholarships

Lower cost life assurance

| Men (non-smokers) £100,000 guaranteed cover 25 year term | | | |
|--|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Age 30* | | Age 35* | |
| EAGLE STAR | £11.49 | EAGLE STAR | £16.68 |
| Direct Line | £12.89 | Direct Line | £18.52 |
| Virgin Direct | £13.13 | Virgin Direct | £18.96 |
| Marks & Spencer | £15.65 | Marks & Spencer | £22.55 |

| Women (non-smokers) £100,000 guaranteed cover 25 year term | | | |
|--|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Age 30* | | Age 35* | |
| EAGLE STAR | £8.55 | EAGLE STAR | £11.41 |
| Virgin Direct | £9.26 | Direct Line | £12.83 |
| Direct Line | £9.76 | Virgin Direct | £13.00 |
| Marks & Spencer | £10.45 | Marks & Spencer | £13.75 |

*Age next birthday. Sample monthly premium rates only. Sources: Companies' Illustrations 2/4/2/4 1998.

For low-cost life assurance
call 0800 77 66 66
24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Only available in the UK. Plan must end before your 70th birthday. These figures are based on cover acceptable at ordinary rates. The plan is also available for ages 18 to 64 next birthday for various terms of cover. Full written details are available on request. Eagle Star Life Assurance Company Limited is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. Information or advice will only be provided on Eagle Star products. For your protection, your call may be recorded.

INVESTMENT FUND & PEP

settle for
second best

FALL UNIT TRUSTS
1980-1997

Guess who's just opened a **FIXED RATE** savings account?

Up to **8.0%** gross p.a. (net 6.9% p.a.)

Rate applicable for deposits of £50,000 or more.

One year fixed rate.

- Guaranteed fixed interest for 12 months
- Tiered interest rates – the more you save, the more you earn
- Save any amount between £2,500-£100,000

| Term Savings Account | | |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| | Annual Gross | Annual Net |
| £2,500 | 7.25% | 5.8% |
| £10,000 | 7.5% | 6.0% |
| £50,000+ | 8.0% | 6.4% |

Legal & General

trust us to deliver

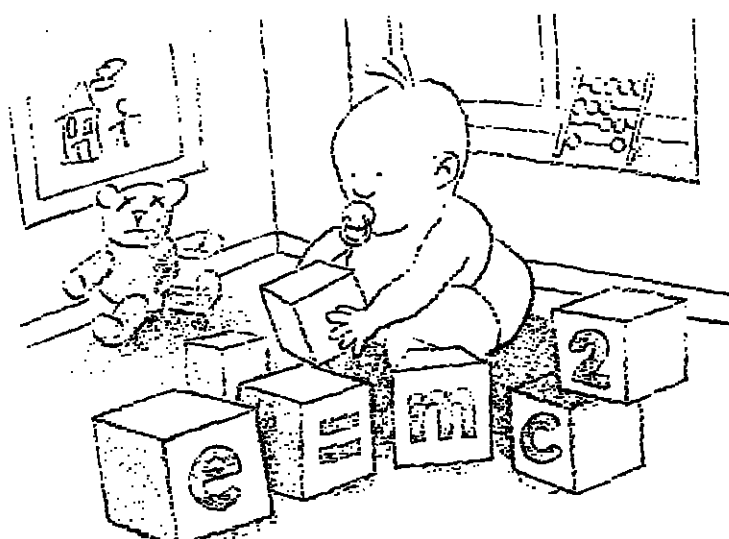
CALL NOW 0500 11 12 00

Lines are open 9am-5pm Mon-Fri and 9am-5pm weekends. For your protection, and to enable us to deal with any queries that may arise, calls will usually be recorded and randomly monitored. www.LandG.com

Please quote ref: CO18 DJ02

This is a limited offer. Rates correct at time of going to press. Interest paid net of income tax (currently 30%). Interest can be paid gross to UK residents subject to required certification. Additional deposits and withdrawals are not permitted during the term of the account. On maturity, the account will automatically become a Legal & General Direct Access Account (see similar). Only available to applicants aged 18 or over and ordinarily resident in the UK. Full written terms and conditions for both accounts will be sent with your application form. Minimum investment £2,500. Maximum investment £100,000. Legal & General Bank Limited. Registered in England No. 2403470. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP.

SAVING FOR EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES



It became obvious that the sooner education expenses were sorted out, the better.

Paying for further education isn't getting any easier. Especially with the Government's plans to abandon the grant system and institute a 'loan' scheme for students.

Likewise, the cost of private schooling is becoming an ever increasing family expense. But at SIT, we've got the answer. We have straightforward and effective savings schemes that offer a perfect solution.

For example, a £50 monthly investment over the past 10 years in SIT would have grown into a substantial £11,800* – a growth rate of over 12.8% p.a.

So take your first steps to building up further education expenses. Call SIT today, or use the coupon below.

THE SCOTTISH INVESTMENT TRUST PLC

INVESTMENT MADE EASY

Please send me the (tick one box) ☐ SIT STOCKPLAN ☐ SIT PEP ☐ BOTH

information pack(s) and application form(s). (Include CAPITALS PLEASE)

NAME (Mr/Ms/Mrs)

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Send this coupon to Investor Services, SIT Savings Ltd, FREEPOST EH882, 6 Albany Place, Edinburgh EH2 0DH.

For a brochure on our LOW COST Share Exchange Scheme tick here ☐

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL FREE 0800 424422

or e-mail us on: heather@sit.co.uk

or return the coupon above – no stamp is required. No salesman will call.

Advertisement issued by SIT Savings Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Scottish Investment Trust PLC and regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. Past performance is no guarantee of future returns. The value of shares and the income from them can go down as well as up and investors may not get back the amount originally invested.

*To 1st January 1998, net dividends reinvested and after all expenses of dealing through SIT's STOCKPLAN savings scheme. Source: The Scottish Investment Trust PLC.



If you want a piece of the New York action, Ian Eichner has a week in a Manhattan apartment that may be right up your street. Photograph: Tom Pilton

A slice of the Apple

An American tycoon has come up with an urban version of timesharing: he is selling stakes in apartments in New York. Jane Slade reports on a novel twist to a tarnished concept

The word "timeshare" still catches at the back of the throat. It smells of hard-sell Eighties-style, of circulars promising free gifts if one attends a "presentation", of rooms in an uncompleted complex and mounting service charges, of two weeks to spend in Majorca - for ever.

Timeshare was once all about buying a fortnight of an apartment in some seaside resort, which you could either use yourself or rent out. The trouble was that everyone wanted to go at the same time - which meant that unless you got in quick you were left with two weeks in February.

As the hundreds of people caught out by commission-hungry salespeople every year will attest, this image is still typical of one end of the market, despite attempts by the timeshare industry to regulate itself. Yet, in typical style, the Americans have hijacked a European idea and made it their own.

Time moves on, and so has timeshare. It is big business in the US, and recently caught the imagination of an American property tycoon. Ian Eichner claims to have redefined "timeshare" as: "One week of a luxurious apartment in the most exciting city in the world, which you can exchange with the same in any one of 85 countries."

Eichner, a fast-talking, high-rise property-developing, rich ex-New York attorney, has just opened the first time-share apartment in New York - and with it coined a new millennium catchphrase: "urban timeshare". Imagine owning 1/52 of a place just over the road from Carnegie Hall, the bright lights of Broadway, Macy's, Bloomingdale's...

"We are looking to attract a completely different market than the original timeshare concept," Mr Eichner explained at the recent grand opening. "The big downside to conventional timeshare is that it's seasonal - urban timeshare isn't."

Mr Eichner wants to entice companies as well as foreign tourists and businessmen into his luxurious Manhattan lair, as well as anyone who wants a bit of luxury for one week a year in a city that is running short of hotel space. The other huge attraction, particularly for the tourist, is that he can swap his week for another elsewhere in the world through Eichner's link-up with the holiday timeshare exchange company RCI.

So if you would rather spend your week (or part of it) on a beach in Bali, or on the ski slopes of Aspen - you can.

Eichner has spent £44m converting half of the 26-storey Park Central Hotel in West 56th Street into The Manhattan Club and 253 luxurious timeshare suites. Its location, near Fifth Avenue and Central Park, couldn't be more central for businessmen or pleasure-seekers.

The apartments range from one-bedroom, one-bath suites to two-bed, two-bath suites. Each comes with a fully-equipped kitchenette with dishwasher and microwave, king- or queen-size beds, queen-size sofa-bed, marble bathrooms, fax and computer hook-up capabilities and colour TVs. Owners also get access to a fitness room, meeting rooms, bar area, sauna and massage rooms and business centre. There is also a 24-hour concierge desk, and housekeeping service. Suites per week begin at £8,850 and rise to £40,000 (at an exchange rate of \$1.58 to the £) and are yours to keep, sell, bequeath, and rent in perpetuity. Prices do not include annual maintenance fees, which are currently £350 a year, or each owner's share of electricity and water.

Mr Eichner has 17,000 timeshare weeks for sale, which owners can either use in their entirety or as individual days throughout the year. It is a novel concept to belong not only to an exclusive New York club, but to own a bit of it as well.

Timeshare's selling techniques have changed, too. "We are not interested in the hard sell," he says. "If people are interested, then we can take them on a tour - no busy banker is going to be enticed by a free gift to attend a presentation."

Despite his reassuring words, he admits that the business community is waiting to see it completed before committing itself.

Timeshare is a particularly attractive proposition to older people, with time to choose when they use. Recent statistics show that 37 per cent of timeshare owners in the US are over 55. That is likely to increase with news that Mr Eichner has just bought 12 acres of Florida's south beach to build another timeshare development.

Time will tell whether they will want to buy into his urban timeshare idea. He is also honing his sights on what he calls a "retrofit" in London (developing an existing hotel into timeshare apartments), Paris and Hong Kong.

When you consider that a hotel room off Broadway would cost you nearly £200 a night, and one-bed suites at the Manhattan Club are twice the space of a Manhattan hotel room, you will have covered your timeshare costs in under five years. It is either that or buying a two-bed flat in central Manhattan which will set you back around £280,000...

The Manhattan Club, 200 West 56th Street, New York, New York 10019; tel: 001 212 489 8488; fax 001 212 541 9766; Website: <http://www.manhattanclub.com>; e-mail: info@manhattanclub.com

Nice home, but they work for it

Fancy living in the grounds of a stately home? Or is a riverside apartment in the city more tempting? Perhaps you own an idyllic retreat, but spend so much time commuting you see little of it. I asked some train-timetable-phobics how they achieved their housing dreams without going on bended knee to the building society.

Breda Blount grew up on the west coast of Ireland. For four years she has lived in a riverside property in London, but has no mortgage. She is landlady of the Morpeth Arms, a "real pub" with an interesting past. Opposite is the "misery stone", where ships loading prisoners bound for Australia moored. Millbank prison was behind the pub, whose cellars would take the overflow of prisoners.

"Tourists love being taken down to see the original cells," says Breda. The pub keeps her busy seven days a week, and living "over the shop" is the only way to do things. But is it hard to separate business from home? "My regulars are my friends. I love this way of life. Even if I won the lottery I'd want to live here," says Breda, who regularly breakfasts in a nearby café for guaranteed peace.

City life affords unusual neighbours, and Breda is friends with curators of the Tate Gallery. "They've just invited me to go and see the Bonnard exhibition." Young's Brewery carries out all maintenance and decoration, leaving Breda with few outings. In return, she tolerates an unusual lodger. "The story goes that a prisoner escaped back into the cellars here and haunts the pub. My barman took a group there and one of them went into a trance and said he was in touch with the ghost." Has Breda heard chains rattling in the night? "The worst thing I've encountered round here is myself."

Ian Turner hears stranger nocturnal noises: "The sound of lions

Prime location, no Tube misery or mortgage hell... so where's the catch? Ginetta Vedrickas on homes that go with the job

roaring and sea lions barking was bad until we got double-glazing." Ian is assistant chief game warden for Longleaf safari park, and receives a tied cottage as part of his employment. He has lived on the estate for 21 years.

Originally from Leeds, he lived in Blackpool for a time and finds jungle noises an improvement on his past homes: "I went to Blackpool recently and it was horrendous." He is happy with his lot, despite being permanently on call: "I don't drink. Someone has to be sensible in case the baby giraffes need bottle-feeding in the night."

Ian snorts at the thought of taking on a mortgage, as he doesn't think his pay would stretch that far, but his work has brought another bonus: "That's how I met the wife. She was a coach driver, bringing the sightseers in."

Tied accommodation can be idyllic, but one person's fantasy isn't necessarily another's. Cheryl Risley grew up in Kent, the so-called Garden of England. Despite inheriting a cottage there, Cheryl is now a community worker living on the bleak Gofflinks estate in Southall, and receives a 12-floor flat as part of her work supporting nine tenants with learning difficulties.

Is this a strange choice? "I prefer London. You've got to have your wits about you, but it's more challenging," says Cheryl.

She finds that living among her tenants gives her greater insight into their personalities and problems. "We

live and breathe the same air, there's no hierarchy. If they complain about rubbish or noise, they know that I'm experiencing the same."

Her work is variable. One minute finds her helping to sort out bills; the next she's ringing the DSS, which she does "while running the bath". She is on call for emergencies, and can't easily get away, even when not working: "People tend to slip notes under the door."

Does she ever consider buying? "I might, but I'd worry about subsidence or tenants running off without paying." Cheryl sees many advantages of living on the job, and travelling to and from Rosa Cottage isn't for her. "I commuted into London for a week, and I'd look at men who spend their lives like that, and think, how do you do it?"

No commuting or mortgage payments are obvious advantages, but tied accommodation has a downside: losing your job could also mean losing your home. Ex-servicemen and women receive mandatory "resettlement advice" when they leave, but are often unprepared for civilian life, according to Cathy Walker, director of welfare for the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association.

Cathy, herself an Army wife, has lived in married quarters for 20 years, and admits she sometimes "feels twitchy" when thinking about getting a foothold on the housing market, particularly when it is on an upturn. "During your potentially critical years you are standing still."

For those not averse to the occasional twitch, life needn't revolve around mortgages and commuting. Ever lie awake worrying about interest rates and train delays? Find yourself a job with a home included. The only thing to rouse you may be the roar of lions or the clank of chains down in the cellar.



Remote control: pictures like these of London's Tower Bridge area allow flats to be seen tested



The virtual show flat is here

Viewing property has never been easier thanks to CD-Rom technology, writes Mary Wilson

The development sounds great, you fancy buying a flat, but there's a big problem - not a brick has been laid. You can look at plans and mull over models, but all this can never replace actually being able to see what you might be buying.

An answer might be the latest interactive CD-Rom technology used by some house-builders to show you exactly how the apartment will look, right down to fittings, lay-out and, perhaps, even views.

Galliard Homes first used an interactive visualisation system last year for Spice Quay, at Butlers Wharf, near London's Tower Bridge. When this development of 92 flats was launched it was nothing but a car-park. But you could sit in the marketing suite in front of a computer and see seamless moving pictures of what it would look like. You could use the mouse to fly round the building, viewing from several angles, and choose a flat to explore.

Once inside, you could look at floor plans and the actual view from each window. The

panorama down the Thames could be seen in daylight or all lit-up at night - and purchasers clearly liked what they virtually saw, as just nine one-, two- and three-bedroom flats are left for sale, priced from £185,000 to £350,000.

The company is using a similar CD-Rom for 22 penthouses and staterooms at the White House development of the old Shell Downstream building in Belvedere Road, Waterloo, where prices will go up to £1.5m.

In Islington, North London, Grove Manor Homes is working on a virtual reality video for the £1.2m penthouse in its Angel on the Green development. "When you do not have a show flat until well into construction, it is a stunning way of showing a purchaser at a very early stage what he can get," says Jeff Duggan, managing director.

Other companies to invest in CD-Roms to help sell their properties are Thirstone and Berkeley Homes (Essex). Thirstone has sent out 2,000 CD-Roms to interested parties in the last eight months.

"As 80 per cent of our developments are sold off-plan, a CD-Rom is an ideal tool to demonstrate the flexibility of a Thirstone Home," says Tony Pidgeley, managing director. Purchasers can choose the colour of the brickwork, the style of windows, the layout of the house, and even the appearance and colour of the drive - and see exactly what they will look like.

Berkeley Homes launched its first interactive CD-Rom last year for four apartment developments in London and has been sending it out instead of a brochure. "Many of our buyers want to reserve homes in advance of the properties being built, and with this we can go several steps forward and provide them with the nearest thing there is to reality," says Julian Lane, the sales and marketing director.

Since the launch of the CD-Rom, the majority of Berkeley's 4,000 enquiries have been for the disc rather than for a printed brochure, and about £10m of property has been sold as a result. "We are hugely excited by

the success of the CD-Rom. Our belief that interactive multimedia would be welcomed by our customers has been completely vindicated," says Steve Bryan, Berkeley's commercial director.

DTZ Debenham Thorpe, a London property agent, has just compiled a CD-Rom for 19 Upper Brook Street, a Georgian mansion in London's Mayfair.

"A recent client who invests heavily in property informed us that he had no time to travel around the world looking for properties to purchase. CD-Roms do not replace personal viewing but they help enhance the marketing tools we are using to sell princely residences," says Peter Stevenette, associate director of DTZ Debenham Thorpe. The property has a £10.5m price-tag.

Spice Quay: 0171-378 0474; The White House: 0171-620 1500; Angel on the Green: 0171-359 5259; Thirstone Homes: 01932 350900; Berkeley Homes, Essex: 01277 222277; DTZ Debenham Thorpe: 0171-405 2749.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

RESIDENTIAL

THE GUILD OF PROFESSIONAL ESTATE AGENTS



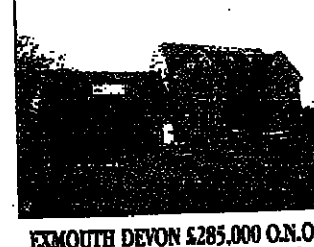
UPPER COLWYN BAY P.O.A.

A quite outstanding detached residence of the highest quality occupying a prime position in one of the sought after residential areas, set in large mature grounds, having a southerly aspect at the rear with fine views to the Conwy Mountains and Anglesey.



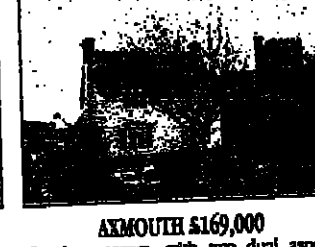
MALVERN, WORCS. \$159,000

A distinctive Grade II listed commercial residential presently trading as an Antiques shop with Sales Shop. Office/Utility; Dining room, 3 fast area, kitchen, 2nd floor sitting rm, 2 bedrooms, Dressing rm/Bedrm, 2 Bathrooms. Small gdn to rear.



EXMOUTH DEVON \$285,000 O.N.O.

Substantial 6 bedroomed, 2 bathroom detached house. Study, 2nd floor sitting rm, full size snooker room, 2nd summer room. Private terrace with heated swimming pool, gas c.h. etc.



AXMOUTH \$169,000

Spacious accommodation with two dual aspect reception rms, with fire places and fine bow windows, lit with utility/conservatory, two dual aspect double bedrooms, single bedroom with shower, large bathroom, c.h. gardens and ample parking.



LAKE WINDERMERE

A rare opportunity, a beautifully situated detached bungalow with wet dock, boat house and 300 ft of Lake frontage. Set in 4 1/2 acres of wooded grounds there are superb views of the lake and fells. For sale by auction Friday 1st May 1998.



CLOSE TO EXMOOR BORDERS

Attractive detached period Cottage with many fine features, 3 bedrooms, one en suite, inglenook fireplace. Large gardens. Garage 27ft x 17ft 6in.



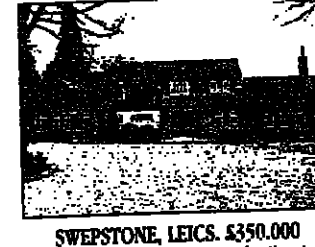
AUGHTON GRANGE \$350,000

Presently under construction by Berkeley Homes. A Modern Country House of excellent proportion set within grounds of about 1.8 acres. Rec hall, drawing rm, din rm, family rm, study, farmhouse kitchen, master bedroom suite, guest suite, 3 further bedrooms, family bathroom etc.



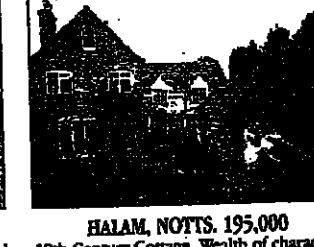
FOREST OF DEAN \$235,000

Charming converted coach house in delightful rural setting near Symonds Yat. Spacious 4-bedroom accommodation, extensive gardens, numerous outbuildings.



SLEAFORD, LEICS. \$350,000

The house offers extensive family sized accommodation and enjoys the benefit of a superb heated indoor swimming pool which has been constructed in recent years to a high specification and standard. Well regarded small rural village location close to A62.



HALAM, NOTTS. 195,000

19th Century Cottage. Wealth of character, 2 reception rooms, 5 bedrooms, farmhouse kitchen and laundry, 2 bathrooms (1 en suite), extensive cottage garden, conservatory and garage.



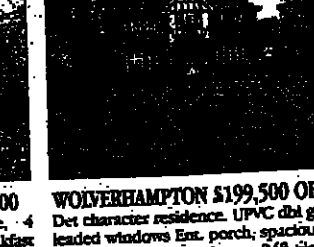
DAVENTRY NORTHANTS \$235,000

The property has been greatly improved by the present owners with works to include a conservatory, double garage, gas c/h, en suite to the master bedroom, fully fitted kitchen with built-in appliances, large conservatory and mature landscaped gardens.



RUGBY, WARWICKSHIRE \$154,000

Traditional style detached house, 4 bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, breakfast kitchen, conservatory gas central heating, leaded light windows garage, private rear garden.



WOLVERHAMPTON \$199,500 OFFERS

Det character residence. UPVC double glazed windows, Est. porch, spacious en suite, hall with attractive entrance, 2.48 dia. loggia, 188 dia. brick en. kitchen, cloakroom, gallery landing, 3 bed, + 6 bed/office, bathroom, p.p.e., store, wash, greenhouse.



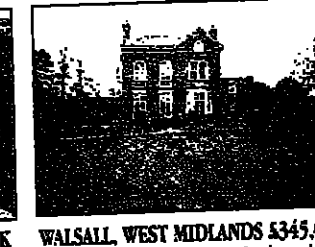
BRACKLEY NORTHANTS \$96,950

Five bedroomed semi det family house, located at the end of a cul de sac and offering hall, lounge, din, family, kitchen, ground floor cloakroom, bedrooms, and two bathrooms, on the first floor, gas radiators, single garage and gdn to front and rear.



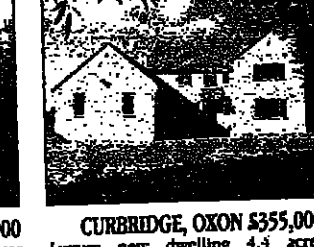
SUTTON COLDFIELD LITL ASTON PK

Exclusive, situated, immaculate freehold detached family residence. 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, luxury breakfast kitchen, double garage, attractive garden. \$425,000. (Birmingham 8 miles).



WALSALL, WEST MIDLANDS \$345,000

Vastly enl. impressive 1. shaped rec hall, large guests cloakroom with sep wc, 3 superb rec rms, spae to first rm, extensive lift, inner hall with Butler's pantry, 1st flr landing with 4 bedrooms, nursery and en suite shower rm, family bathroom, sep wc. 2nd floor with 3 double rms, 1 single rm and family bathroom, etc.



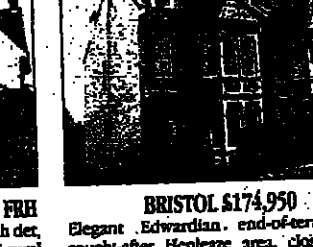
CURBRIDGE, OXON \$355,000

Luxury new dwelling 4.4 acres. A substantial new det house on the outskirts of Curbridge village just two miles from Witney. 5 bedrooms, 3 en suite, family bathroom with shower, 4 recs, superb kitchen, cloakroom, oil ch, double glazing, double garage, overall 4.4 acres overlooking open countryside.



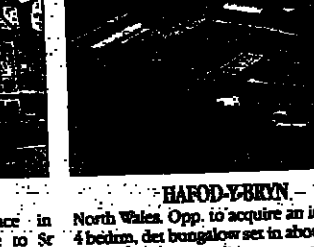
RUISLIP, MIDDLESEX \$238,500 FREE

Royal Leamington Spa. 5 miles A stylish det, family residence, occupying a semi-rural position and standing in grounds of about 1/3 of an acre. 2 rec rms, bilco, utility, 4 bedrooms, nursery bedroom, en suite shower rm, principal bathroom, 2-car garage, established gdn.



BRISTOL \$174,950

Elegant Edwardian, end-of-service in sought-after Henleaze area, close to St. Ursula's, Bathampton and Red Maids Schools. 5 bedrooms, 3 receptions, garage.



HAROD-YEHON

North Wales. Opp. to acquire an individual 4 bedroom, det bungalow set in about 6 acres of grazing commanding panoramic views over hills to the sea, together with an excellent boarding, tennis and stabling business. Good range of outbuildings, garaging, and visitors parking, ch. \$325,000.




NEW MARKETFIELD, LEICS. \$139,500

Impressive detached period cottage, extensive accommodation, includes former post office, 3 ground floor rooms, 4 first floor rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 fitted cloakrooms, private walled rear garden, carpets and curtains included. Vacant possession.

OVER 400 OFFICES NATIONALLY • REGIONAL COLOUR MAGAZINES • LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE
For a free directory of Guild Members who provide probably the finest selection of property in England and Wales call 01480 354621... or on the internet at <http://www.property-platform.com>

JUMBO SIZE LOFTS!

WITH LIVING AREAS UP TO 55FT X 30FT



PRICES FROM ONLY £59,995 for over 1,000 sqft

WITH LARGE TERRACES FROM £76,995

1930'S INDUSTRIAL ART DECO BUILDING DESIGNED BY SIR OWEN WILLIAMS

VERSATILE SPACE WITH FLOORING, BATHROOM, KITCHEN PLUMBING, GAS CENTRAL HEATING, DOUBLE GLAZING, ELECTRICS

CALL NOW FOR DETAILS

ECA
Hadley Cooper Associates
0171 363 8888

مکان الاصل

Look before you leap abroad

An overseas assignment is the perk of perks. But do some homework before you rush to pack your bags, Robert Liebman suggests

Ah, France. A cultured nation whose people know their wine, love good food – and, when they vacate properties, take the toilet seats with them.

So says Judy Braham, Paris-based managing director of Executive Relocations France, who notes that most British expats are unprepared for the quirky realities of daily French life. "Homes and apartments here are very small, most are unfurnished, and when they are furnished, the furniture is usually very low quality. And they take everything when they move: toilets seats, cupboards, fridges, stoves, the lot."

The culprits are not dastardly French landlords but ordinary occupiers. "The tenants take them. It's the French way," says Ms Braham, in heavily accented English. She hails from New Zealand.

Caroline Jury, a senior finance lawyer and partner in the Frankfurt office of London solicitors Clifford Chance, eagerly agreed to live and work abroad – twice. "I joined Clifford Chance in London with the idea of working abroad, and I was seconded as a 'firefighter' to Amsterdam for a few months," says Ms Jury. "When I returned home, the UK seemed strange to me. Then the Frankfurt office approached me."

Language was not much of a barrier for Ms Jury, but cultural differences are less easily bridged. "Anglo-Saxons are proactive and Germans are reactive, so some of my business dealings can be frustrating," she admits. Mostly, however, she relishes the worklife of an expat because "there is a different approach to law, hence more interesting. I am learning all the time."

Frankfurt itself is "a little soulless but very pleasant and offering a good quality of life with great housing that is better quality for money than London. A lot of people work in Frankfurt during the week and go home on Friday, so it is quiet on weekends. Being in the centre of Europe, Frankfurt is very convenient," she finds.

Before she left the UK for Germany, her employer eased the transition by organising many aspects of the relocation. Companies lacking in-house relocation expertise can turn to companies like Hambro for a "full relocation service," according to global business manager Clare Harrison. "We bring expats into and out of foreign countries. We can help find housing and schools, and prepare people for life in their new country. We explain cultural differences, and they may ask us, for example, how to behave at a dinner party." For couples, Hambro also provides "partner support".

Hambro assigns an advisor here and also in the destination country. "You are always working with at least two people, and we provide ongoing assignment support," says Ms Harrison. The destination adviser stays on the

scene even after the expat has settled in. "There is always someone you can turn to for help or advice," she says.

For certain destinations, Hambro also provides comprehensive health advice and can also bring in specialist security consultants. Such relocation consultation is not exactly cheap but bypassing it altogether can be more costly long-term. "If a relocation fails and you have to bring someone back and send someone else out, those costs are phenomenal. Our costs are very small compared to the hidden costs of a failed assignment," she says.

Relocating employees are more likely to settle in successfully if they can see and judge things in advance for themselves. To that end, companies like Executive Relocations offer familiarisation tours. "We provide information that is specific to the city they are moving to," says Ms Braham, who was herself an expat in London before founding her company in Paris a decade ago. "For the majority of our clients, we drive around with them, showing them apartments in various neighbourhoods. We also explain things like shopping and transport." Work permits, visas, social security details and the names of, for example, bilingual doctors are also part of the service.

Although the brochure is silent on one specific, Executive Relocations can also recommend shops which sell assiettes de toilette.

Most Britons relocate to an EU country or America, where the biggest threats to health arise more from glut-ton than guns. The risks in many tropical and developing countries, however, should not be overlooked or minimised.

"Anyone going to an exotic location should get appropriate medical advice," says Dr Peter Barnett, senior medical advisor to MASTA, Medical Advisory Services to Travellers Abroad. "In 1996, a total of 2,500 cases of malaria were imported into the UK, with 10 deaths, and they were all theoretically avoidable."

Based in the London School of Tropical Medicine, MASTA monitors the full panoply of travel-medicine developments, such as mosquito resistance to anti-malarials. Travel medicine is a speciality, and MASTA is considerably more authoritative and up-to-date than the average GP. MASTA provides travel briefs, telephone helplines, jabs and mosquito nets, among other things.

Toilet seats in French are really siège des cabinets. And hangovers, not hepatitis, are the greater danger to most British expats.

Executive Relocations France, 30 rue de Lubeck, 75116 Paris, France, tel. 00-33-1 47 55 60 29; Hambro Countrywide Relocation, PO Box 6246, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 8BX, tel. 01256 708484; MASTA, tel. 0171 631 4408.



Chic galore – but Paris homes are very small, warns expat Judy Braham, above

Photograph: Alastair Miller

DISCOVER the world's most desirable residential address?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



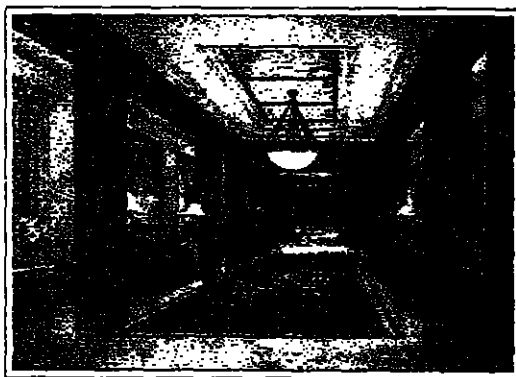
Definitive location



Classical architecture



Crafted interiors



Evocative atmospheric

ST JOHN'S
WESTMINSTER

APARTMENTS OF UNRESERVED LUXURY

1 bedroom apartments from £230,000 2 bedroom apartments from £395,000

3 bedroom apartments from £630,000 penthouses from £1,500,000

FPDSavills

MARKETING SUITE
0171 630 8866

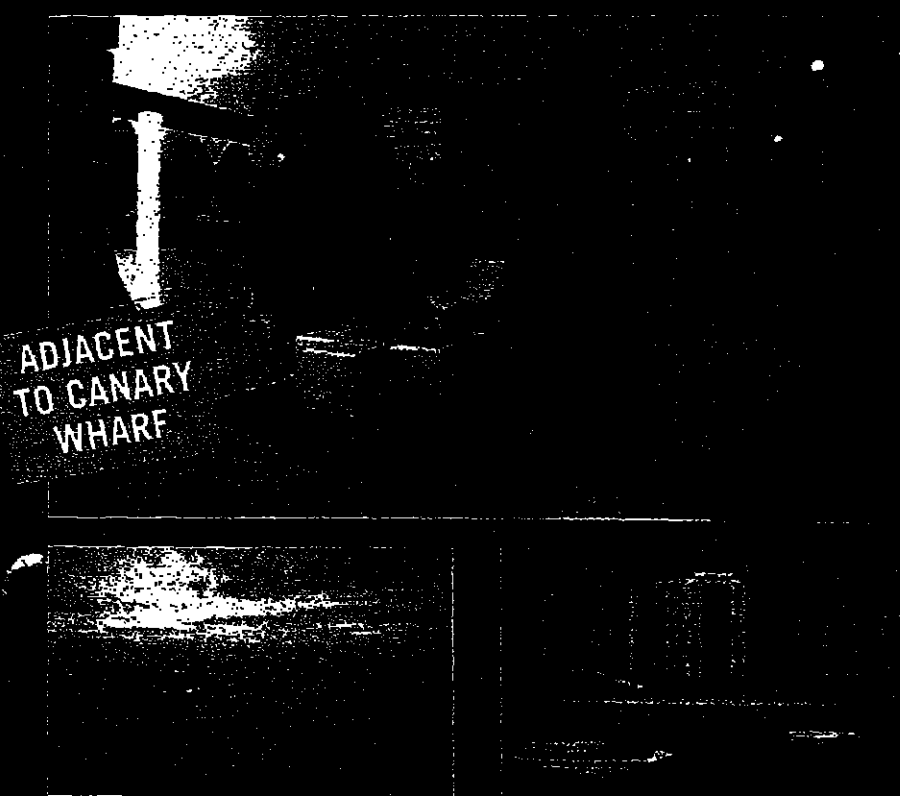
BALLYMORE
PROPERTIES
http://www.ballymore.co.uk

SET BETWEEN THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, THE TATE GALLERY AND THE RIVER THAMES

live in tomorrow's world today!

at London's fastest selling riverside development!

266 APARTMENTS SOLD - FINAL PHASE NOW AVAILABLE



ADJACENT
TO CANARY
WHARF

VIEW THIS WEEKEND • LONDON'S MOST EXCITING AND
FUTURISTIC RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT • DESIGNED TO
MEET THE LIVING NEEDS OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

EXTENSIVE LANDSCAPED GARDENS • 4,000SQFT LEISURE COMPLEX
CONCIERGE • GARAGE PARKING • HIGH SPECIFICATION • FULLY FITTED

LARGE RIVERSIDE LUXURY 2 BED APARTMENTS
WITH BALCONIES FROM ONLY £200,000

BALLYMORE
PROPERTIES
http://www.ballymore.co.uk

Open 7 days.
Monday to Friday 10am-6pm.
Saturday & Sunday 11am-5pm

FPDSavills

MARKETING SUITE
0171 537 7502

williamson
harcourt

CSIP

هناك في الامم